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The Nation.

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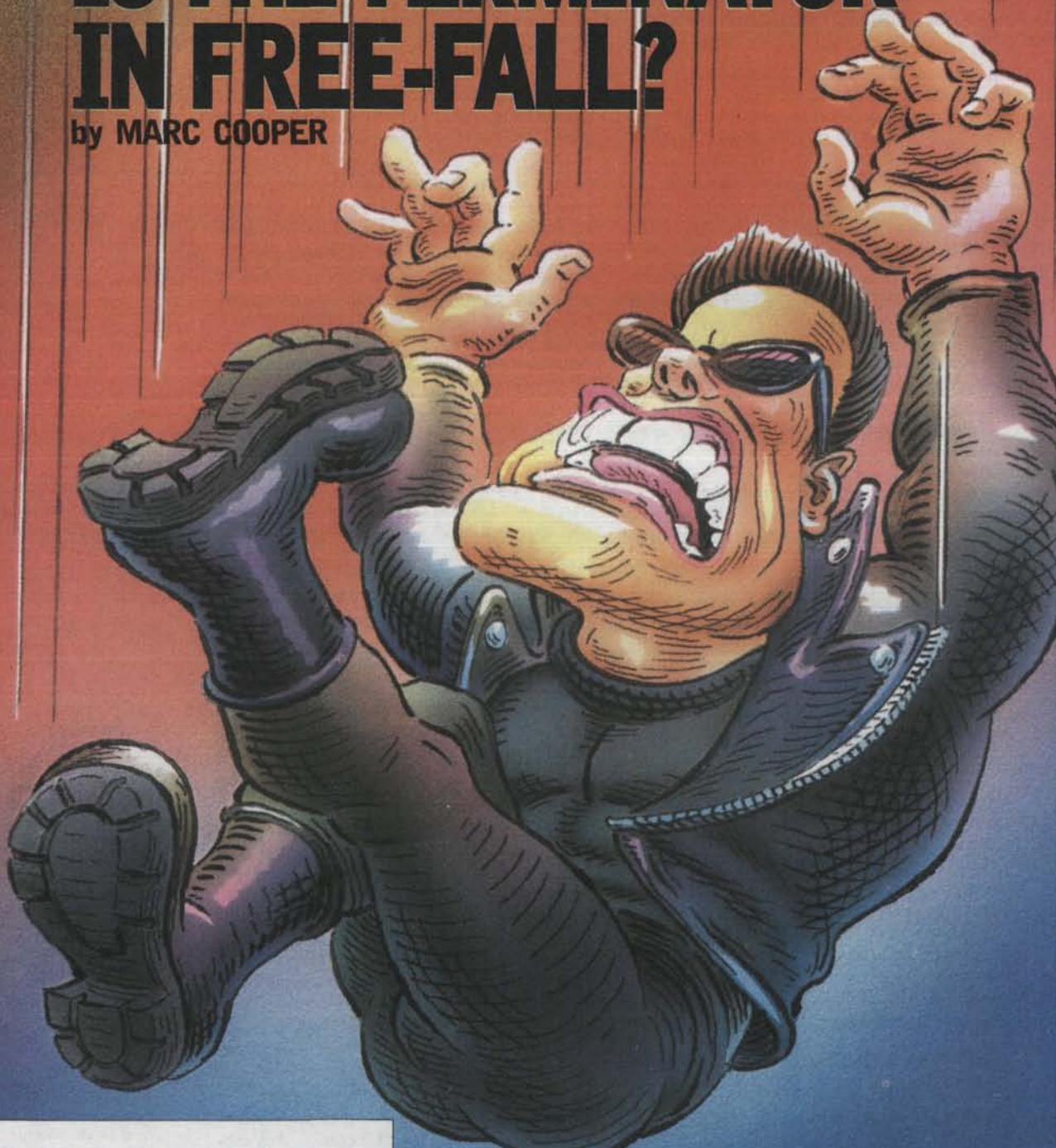
IS THE TERMINATOR IN FREE-FALL?

by MARC COOPER



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LETTERS

R. O. BLECHMAN

OH GEORGE, POOR GEORGE...

Camarillo, Calif.

■ Your October 3 cover almost made me feel sorry for George W. Bush. Now cut that out!

DORIS VERNON

NOTES IN A BOTTLE: ON THE FLOOD

Los Osos, Calif.

■ Your September 26 cover says, "After the Flood: The Reckoning." Hah! What reckoning? Bush and his cronies will leave office and head for highly lucrative jobs working for their masters on K Street, and not a single member of the "moral values/accountability" crowd will be held responsible for war crimes, war profiteering, theft, mismanagement, grotesque incompetence, looting the public treasury and criminal negligence. The right-wing spin machine will declare "Mission Accomplished" and voters will elect any politician who promises to stop gay marriage and reinstate prayer in the schools. Reckoning, indeed. ANN CALHOUN

Franklin, NC

■ Yes, the criminal neglect of our decaying infrastructure did accelerate under Reagan and subsequent neo-whatsits, but it *began* under Nixon ["The Disaster President," Sept. 26]. The cost now—should we choose to repair, refurbish and/or build anew desperately needed roads, bridges, railways, canals, levees, power grids, schools and a host of other items—exceeds $20 trillion! If an enlightened (by Katrina and Rita) Congress should enact, by a veto-proof majority, legislation authorizing such repair, it could restore prosperity by putting Americans back to work! EDWARD G. ROBLES

Riverside, Calif.

■ Bush's delayed reaction to the Katrina storm was foreshadowed by his reaction to the California energy crisis at the beginning of his first term. Remember, he said it was our own fault because of our state's conservation measures. It has since been proven that it was the collusion of companies with ties to Cheney that caused the shortage of electricity. Remember, like Louisiana, California is a Democratic state that did not support him in his election. MEL SANCHEZ

THE REAL THREAT ON THE BORDERS

Aromas, Calif.

■ Sasha Abramsky asks in "Terror on the Inner Border" [Sept. 26] if the majority of detainees, mostly Latino, arrested on the border pose a security threat. Probably not. However, to curb the flow of cheap, nonunionized labor into this country would be a tremendous economic threat to American capitalist enterprises large and small. Isn't that the real threat on the borders? Who on the left supports the unimpeded flow of cheap labor to unscrupulous employers desperate to compete with China? The left has been diligent about pointing out the political and constitutional issues at our borders. Good for us.

Yet the failures of the Mexican economy, the resulting opportunism by US firms (as they gobble up slave-wage labor swarming across the borders) and the impact of decades of this on the US workforce have elicited a response by progressives as flaccid as Brownie's to Katrina. Now that so many are unemployed as a result of two hurricanes, will the left remain silent? I predict the rebuilding of the Gulf states will be performed mainly by low-wage, nonunionized undocumented immigrants. The immorality of America's new slave economy will be as threatening as the toxic sludge covering the streets of New Orleans. JIM SAFRANEK

ABRAMSKY REPLIES

Sacramento, Calif.

■ Jim Safranek is correct that illegal immigration allows US corporations to compete in an ever more cutthroat global labor environment. He is also correct that this is a serious matter for a US labor force that has lost gains it fought for over decades and that risks becoming something of a Third World proletariat within a First World country. But the notion that we should ratchet down the borders to solve our economic problems is flawed. Our economy has always thrived on being open; our society and culture have always benefited from the polyglot influences of immigrants from around the world. There are other ways to tackle corporate exploitation that don't put all the law-enforcement expectations on impoverished people trying to make better lives for themselves.

First, the government should get serious about prosecuting and fining employers who hire illegal, low-paid workers or who reap the benefits of subcontractors' dubious labor practices. Second, we must have an honest discussion about how much we rely on cheap labor to sustain our way of life. We want people to clean our houses and mow our lawns and keep our restaurants open, but we don't want to pay them living wages. Were we to pay a living wage, we'd still have to import laborers—but they'd be coming here legally and would be protected by the same laws that protect US citizens. Any society has a right to police its borders and regulate the influx of immigrants. The double standard is not that the Border Patrol is failing to stop the "illegals"; it's that corporate America prefers to keep large numbers of people coming in, but in the "illegal" category. This isn't a Border Patrol question; it's a matter of seeing through the political double talk and economic double standards. SASHA ABRAMSKY

OH THE GORY OF IT ALL

New York City

■ I have to take issue with Lee Siegel's review of my book, *Oh the Glory of It All* ["The Unexamined Life," Aug. 29/Sept. 5]. Siegel is perhaps one of the foremost reviewers in the country. But at the crescendo of his argument he quotes detailed passages of dialogue from my book that he doubts I could have remembered, making them (and my supposedly questionable recollections) the center of his scathing review—the evidence around which much of his poorly reasoned argument revolves.

I join him here mid-sentence: "...the more you read, the more you wonder about the authenticity of Wilsey's apparent candor. For one thing, Wilsey re-creates precise dialogue—quotation marks and all—that he claims to have heard as a very young boy, not to mention precise descriptions of what he says he was feeling at exact moments at the time. This is an excerpt from an extended dinner-table conversation at his parents' house before they're divorced that he claims to have overheard. He was 4:

> MOM: How do you feel you have changed?
> MAN'S VOICE: I was a Marxist. I had rejected spiritual values. But then...I saw the design in nature and I was convinced there was a Creator.... It was a bad time for me. I wanted to go home to the United States. Friends of mine got into power and I thought they would help me but they didn't.

"This miraculously recollected conversation goes on for several hundred words."

Siegel makes the same point again a few lines below: "Here is the 12-year-old Sean in Moscow in the early 1980s, as part of a group of children transported around the world by his mother, who through her social connections cate of world peace and nuclear disarmament. Sean is standing in the office of a Soviet official named Ruben, who is speaking informally to Wilsey's group:

> Ruben was talking about the Soviet Union's many allies.... He said, 'I'd like to reemphasize that all of those people regardless of their faith or race or color or nationality are absolutely equal in their rights. And I am not merely talking of...equality of peoples in the Soviet Union. For it is a genuine and true equality in everything and every sphere of life.'

"Strangely, not a single reviewer has won-

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EDITORIALS

Torture on the Hill

Over a single week in October, the President's entire coalition suddenly seemed in danger of unraveling. There's no doubt about the political import of Republican fratricide over George W. Bush's nominating Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court, perhaps betokening the long-overdue rupture of the patronage bargain between the President and the religious right. But in global terms, the emerging chasm between Congress and the President over the Iraq War in general and war crimes in particular is of the most profound consequence—signaled by the Senate's bracing passage, by a 90-to-9 vote, of John McCain's anti-torture amendment to the defense appropriations bill.

The Senate's passage of the amendment stands as a singular legislative attempt to corral Bush into compliance with international law and human rights standards. McCain's legislation, which would prohibit the use of "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" by the military, bears the unmistakable moral authority of Vietnam POW McCain and Vietnam vet Senator Chuck Hagel and the strategic endorsement of more than two dozen retired senior military officers, including former Secretary of State Colin Powell and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff John Shalikashvili. No longer can the White House pretend that for the sake of national security Congress has acquiesced in torture. The most shocking aspect of the McCain amendment is not the bill's content but the White House's threat of a veto in the face of near-unanimous Senate support. Even if Administration arm-twisting brings a challenge in the House-Senate conference committee, the overwhelming margin of the Senate vote sends an important message to the federal courts about legislative intent—and further isolates the Administration.

The Senate Republicans' bout of conscience is, of course, welcome, but why so late in the war? Explain it in part by simple politics—in particular, GOP leaders' ever more urgent need to establish an identity separate from a White House mired in scandal. But conscience is at work too, starting with an officer who witnessed the abuses and refused to remain silent. When Capt. Ian Fishback's repeated inquiries to superior officers about torture in the 82nd Airborne Division were met with evasion or thinly veiled threats, he turned to Capitol Hill; it was his discussions with Senate aides that finally goaded the Army into ordering an investigation. He also turned to Human Rights Watch, whose subsequent report demonstrates that torture in Iraq "was systematic and was known at varying levels of command" and points out that the abuses "can be traced to the Bush Administration's decision to disregard the Geneva Conventions" in the Afghan war. Credit, too, the cognitive dissonance experienced by Republicans like JAG reservist Senator Lindsey Graham, a bill co-sponsor, and McCain and Hagel, who make a point of quietly visiting veterans at Walter Reed Hospital every week.

Abuses that seemed expedient—or at least comprehensible—to many in the months after 9/11 are now properly understood even by Republicans as part of the Bush Administration's broader pattern of abuse of executive authority, visible from Iraq to Louisiana. (That's why the nomination of Timothy Flanigan—implicated in the Iraq torture memo and the Jack Abramoff lobbying scandal—for the post of deputy attorney general was abruptly withdrawn.)

McCain and his colleagues are attempting nothing less than to extricate the government from direct complicity in crimes of war. War crimes are the deepest and darkest expression of the moral degradation now permeating the White House. The McCain amendment and the President's threat to veto it lay out the crisis facing the White House and the Republicans: a crisis of law and legitimacy.

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Squeezing the Have-Nots

The country is overloaded now with explosive political preoccupations, too many to keep straight, but there is one more potential disaster lurking behind the headlines—the economy. Not to worry, say the newspapers. The White House assures us the Bush economy is going great. The Federal Reserve agrees. Notwithstanding the tempest that flattened the Gulf Coast, the Fed is worried that the economy is expanding *too* strongly—it might provoke price inflation. So, trying to slow things down, chairman Greenspan keeps on raising interest rates. Most economic forecasters say nothing's changed: Growth will slow down in the second half of this year and then pick up again smartly in early 2006, as factories reopen and reconstruction spending stimulates new production and jobs. Democrats have little to add, beyond raging righteously as usual against the President's tax cuts and budget deficits.

Meanwhile, back in the real world, the economic news is not cooperating with the official optimism. Folks in the bottom half of the economy are already squeezed hard. They will be bloodied and bankrupt if economic policy inadvertently induces a recession.

There are ominous signs. Consumer spending plunged dramatically in August (the sharpest one-month decline since 9/11) and so did personal incomes. The storm-driven collapse of New Orleans immediately wiped out nearly 300,000 jobs, a number likely to grow much larger as more people find their way to the unemployment office. Even more worrisome is the negative savings rate that emerged for American households before the big storm but amid already soaring gasoline prices. In July families spent, at an annual rate, $101 billion more than their disposable income. This "dissavings" continued in August: "certainly the worst since the banking crisis of 1933," economic consultant Charles McMillion observed. If consumers now pull back from spending to rebuild savings—many will have no choice—this retrenchment may converge with other negative forces and could "easily develop into a downward cycle leading to recession," McMillion warned.

Given these fragile circumstances, the prevailing currents of official thinking are all pushing the economy in the wrong direction. Economic policy is often decided as an unpleasant choice among various bad outcomes—which consequence would be the worst for the country? Swelling federal deficits can have deleterious effects on the future, but right now America actually needs larger federal deficits to get through this storm—government-injected economic stimulus that will quickly generate higher incomes and more jobs. A bout of price inflation would disrupt planning and profits for business and finance, but that is a small matter compared with the devastation a recession would impose on wage earners and debt-soaked families in the bottom half of the economy.

The Federal Reserve's single-minded obsession with inflation—intended to preserve Greenspan's reputation as he approaches his retirement—is the most wrongheaded and potentially most harmful policy. In the annals of US monetary policy, a reliable

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sign of recession ahead is the central bank's raising interest rates on short-term borrowing higher than the rates on longer-term credit. The Fed is perilously close to creating that unnatural condition known as the "inverted yield curve." If Greenspan persists with two or three more rate increases, the yellow warning light will be flashing.

Democrats, meanwhile, are still smitten with the Rubinomics they learned in the Clinton years, and they yearn to win respectability in financial circles by preaching fiscal rectitude. Wrong economics and bad politics too. Repealing the Bush tax cuts is a noble (though unlikely) goal. But under the present conditions, moving toward a balanced budget is harmful, especially when the Federal Reserve is tightening credit. The Democrats should concentrate instead on how to spend money—lots of it—in smart, socially useful ways that help struggling wage earners. Rebuilding schools and homes to "green" standards, for instance, could become a progressive multiplier in storm-battered New Orleans—a major employer for local residents, a dramatic reform that cleans up the notorious petrochemical pollution, an economic anchor that raises local property values for working-class and poor neighborhoods. With brave exceptions, though, Democrats no longer think like this. They think like uptight bookkeepers.

George W. Bush's new rhetoric makes him sound like Mr. Born-Again Big Spender, but predictably he intends to give the money to the wrong people—and in ways that lack immediate economic impact. Keeping the economy on track would be easier for the President if Greenspan were cooperating, but Bush must prevent his frothier colleagues from making things worse by reducing federal spending. The GOP's "deficit hawks," who want to whack Medicare and Medicaid to pay for Gulf Coast reconstruction, are—how else to put it?—out of their minds.

In the basic design of American capitalism, recessions always deliver the most pain and severest losses in reverse order—punishing the weak and less affluent first. Thorstein Veblen called it "the slaughter of the innocents," a nasty ritual that sacrifices the lambs for the benefit of the lions. The rest of us may have to pull back a bit, but our lives are not greatly disrupted by recession. If we have wealth, it will be protected from inflation and possibly even enhanced in value. Businesses typically use a recession as an opportunity to reorganize, trimming surplus workers. If they were asked, many citizens would perhaps choose recession as the least-bad risk. Evidently so do our current leaders. The economy is not governed with the bottom half in mind.

WILLIAM GREIDER

Scamming the States

In a potential bombshell for the ways states and cities subsidize corporations in the name of jobs, the Supreme Court announced in late September that it will hear the case of *DaimlerChrysler v. Cuno*. A year ago the US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit ruled that a huge investment tax credit given by the State of Ohio for a new Jeep plant in Toledo violated the commerce clause of the Constitution. If the Supremes uphold the decision many job subsidies are likely to be invalidated. In the world of "economic development," where states and cities spend at least $50 billion a year, such a ruling would be huge news.

The DaimlerChrysler episode is a classic case of "job blackmail," in which the automaker threatened to move Toledo's long-standing Jeep production, playing Ohio against Michigan. Ohio "won" with a package valued at about $281 million.

Such episodes have become epidemic: state versus state or more commonly suburb versus suburb. Boeing did it to Washington State for the Dreamliner project. Dell did it to North Carolina. Dozens have done it to New York City. Raytheon and Fidelity did it to Massachusetts. Cabela's does it and so does Wal-Mart. The average state now subsidizes jobs in more than thirty ways. Individual deals routinely involve eight or ten giveaways: property tax abatements, corporate income tax credits, tax increment financing, low-interest loans, free land—and just plain cash. Such packages often exceed $100,000 per job.

The trouble is, the system is rigged. State auditors, investigative journalists and tax watchdogs have repeatedly found that companies fail to create or retain as many jobs as they promise. Others are paying poverty wages or failing to provide healthcare. Some don't create any new jobs or actually lay people off. Subsidized companies are even outsourcing jobs offshore. The other promised benefit—higher tax revenue—often proves false or exaggerated as well. That's the great American jobs scam: a system that enables corporations to exact huge taxpayer subsidies by promising a stronger economy—and then lets them fail to deliver.

In the same quarter-century that states and cities have larded on these wasteful giveaways, they have had to cut corners on their budgets, deferring maintenance on infrastructure. New Orleans's shattered levees are a tragic example, but the American Society of Civil Engineers warns of a cumulative physical deficit of $1.6 trillion that threatens everything from water quality and reliable electricity to highway safety and mass transit.

With roots in the Great Depression, this rigged system matured by the 1970s, with secretive site-location consultants (like Fantus), "business climate" experts (like Grant Thornton) and a corporate network orchestrating attacks on state tax codes. Today it includes consultants who help companies avoid leaving money on the table—and even an embryonic industry buying and selling unused economic development tax credits.

Consider Dell's recent deal for a new computer assembly plant in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The company secretly negotiated state subsidies worth $200 million to $225 million, which were then presented by Governor Mike Easley to the legislature for one day of debate—up or down, no amendments allowed. Then Dell played three localities against one another and won an additional $37.2 million from Forsyth County and Winston-Salem. All this for a facility that will cost a projected $100 million to $115 million—less than half the value of the subsidies!

Increasingly, however, taxpayers are fighting back. A wide rainbow—including social service advocates, community groups, unions and labor federations, tax and budget watchdogs, and environmentalists—are rewriting jobs policy from the grassroots up. They're winning "disclosure" laws requiring annual, company-

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COMMENT

specific reporting on costs and benefits (twelve states and counting); "clawbacks," which allow taxpayers to get some or all of their money back if a company falls short on jobs or other promised benefits; and job-quality standards, or wage and healthcare requirements (in forty-three states and forty-six localities).

Coalitions are also demanding budget reforms to make hidden corporate entitlements fully visible when states make tough budget choices. School boards are becoming aware that they deserve more say when property tax abatements hurt public education funding. Activists against sprawl and Wal-Mart are increasingly using the leverage of subsidies in big-box fights.

Of course, the Bush Administration's post-Katrina plans—the Gulf Opportunity Zone, which promises a windfall for oil companies and casinos—are swimming against this tide of progress. But community groups and unions are resisting, informed by New York City watchdogs about the many scams in the $20 billion package for the post-9/11 rebuilding of Lower Manhattan [see David Dyssegaard Kallick, "Building a New Table," October 24].

Against this roaring backdrop—and related lawsuits in North Carolina and Minnesota—*DaimlerChrysler v. Cuno* goes to the Supreme Court. No matter how the case is decided, the issue can only grow hotter. Money is being wasted on secret corporate giveaways when it is needed to rebuild our infrastructure, and the costs are becoming clearer by the day. GREG LEROY

Greg LeRoy is the author of The Great American Jobs Scam: Corporate Tax Dodging and the Myth of Job Creation *(www.greatamericanjobsscam.com), from which this is adapted. He is director of Good Jobs First (www.goodjobsfirst.org).*

CALVIN TRILLIN

REASSURING THE RIGHT

The President, who never tires
Of naming cronies, named Ms. Miers
To be a Justice. I'm not kidding.
He said he knows she'll do his bidding.
The social-issues right went crazy.
They called her record much too hazy.
Though through the code, with some contortion,
Bush signaled that she hates abortion,
They asked, so why is she not willing
To say right out it's baby killing?
Responding to this strong attack, he
Assured the right she's really wacky.
In phone calls Rove, in hopes of winning
Support from preachers, gave this spinning:
It's by her church that ye shall know her.
Her church is low. No church is lower.
Her church friends (please think Holy Rollers)
Treat embryos like kids in strollers—
Including embryos of rapists.
The Baptists to these folks are papists.
She's not the moderate you deem her.
If you're extreme, then she's extremer.
Her style is not to be dramatic,
But be assured she is fanatic.

Bono Meets Dr. Shock

One of the stranger duos in the performing arts hit New York City on October 5: Jeffrey Sachs and Bono. The economist delivered the inaugural Daniel Patrick Moynihan lecture at New York University, and the rock star was his warm-up act. Their common theme was the moral urgency of relieving African poverty, but all the fans and TV cameras dogging Bono made it easy to overlook that.

It's not often that an economist attracts a follower and promoter like Bono, lead singer of the bombastic Irish rock group U2. The pairing, and their common theme, seem especially odd to anyone who remembers Sachs's history from the late 1980s and early '90s, when he earned the nickname Dr. Shock.

In thinking about the New Sachs, it's worth recalling the Old Sachs. His debut on the global stage was as an adviser to Bolivia, where he recommended a combination of tight fiscal and monetary policy, which came to be known as "shock therapy," that helped bring down the country's inflation rate from 11,750 percent in 1985 to a mere 15 percent in 1987. That's not a wholly bad achievement—almost no one likes hyperinflation—but the disinflation did nothing to change Bolivia's status as one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere.

That alleged "success" attracted the attention of politicians and development officials as Communism was about to make its extremely troubled "transition" to post-Communism. Sachs was hired as an adviser to several governments, most famously Poland and Russia. Living up to his nickname, Sachs generally advocated a rapid transition to a market economy, featuring overnight privatizations and the freeing of long-regulated prices. Poland is counted by some as a "success" story, even though unemployment and poverty rose. But Russia endured one of the worst economic and social collapses in history. Several years ago, when I asked Sachs to comment on Russia's sorry outcome, he blamed the Yeltsin government for failing to take his advice. Apparently this is an old Sachs ploy; he told the banking magazine *Euromoney* in 1992 that the problems with Poland's less than happy transition were the government's fault, because it failed to privatize quickly enough.

Ah, but that's history, as we like to say when we consign inconvenient facts to the trash. Pursuing a musical conceit, Bono referred to Sachs's "early works" in Russia and Eastern Europe, forgetting that those works helped throw millions into poverty. Bringing that up might have interfered with the performance of their mutual boy-crush. Bono called Sachs "my professor, my teacher, my rock star"—and he confessed to being jealous of

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Sachs's latest celebrity sidekick, Angelina Jolie. When Sachs took the stage, he returned the flattery by declaring that Bono should win not one but four Nobel Prizes: in economics, literature, peace and, most surprising, in physics—because just as Einstein demonstrated curvatures in space, Bono proved that in politics right can meet left. Someone should tell George W. Bush!

It's easy to make fun of this vain duo—and, frankly, it's hard to stop—but it must be admitted that they're doing good work. Several years ago Bono, purportedly a devout Christian, managed to convince Jesse Helms that Jesus would want him to support assistance to Africans with AIDS (which is presumably what inspired Sachs's strange remark about the curvature of political space). And Sachs's tireless lobbying for debt relief for the world's poorest countries (most of them in Africa) is highly admirable; no one of comparable stature in his profession comes close (though it doesn't seem as though he's winning any converts among the movers and shakers). He's also a tough critic of the invasion of Iraq and of the neocolonial brutalities of IMF austerity programs, using language far stronger than any that Paul Krugman would ever deploy. Still, Sachs hasn't completely severed his links to orthodoxy. His thinking about the situation of the so-called middle-income countries, like Mexico and Brazil, is fairly conventional, though they too suffer from heavy debts and the toxic legacy of colonialism.

But he is right about the misery of the billion people who live on a dollar a day or less. We could end extreme poverty in the world for what would amount to pocket change for the rich countries; we could pretty much eliminate the malaria that's endemic in Africa for even less. But we don't, because no one cares enough. Sachs and Bono (and Jolie) are doing their best to make us care. It would all go down a lot better, though, if Sachs would admit how wrong he was about Russia.

DOUG HENWOOD

Doug Henwood is the editor of Left Business Observer. *His book* After the New Economy *is recently out in paperback from the New Press.*

In Fact . . .

GERMANY'S MAJORS IN MERGER

■ Norman Birnbaum writes: The two largest German parties, the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, reluctantly decided to form a coalition government—and promptly began to fight each other. Angela Merkel will be chancellor, while Gerhard Schröder's Social Democrats will have eight of the sixteen ministries. Schröder, who will retire, called the election because his coalition no longer gave him reliable majorities, while the Christian Democrats blocked his policies in the upper house. Now, unlike their leader Merkel, many Christian Democrats agree with most Social Democrats (and, according to the polls, a majority of the electorate) that the primary task of the new government is not to demolish the welfare state but to retain it. German bankers and industrialists, loudly lamenting the result, have understood the message and begun quiet talks with the trade unions on a new social pact. As for foreign policy, the Social Democratic foreign minister will not come to Washington to pledge allegiance. The outgoing coalition's emphasis on constructing an autonomous Europe will be strengthened. That, too, is what a large majority of Germans want. Perhaps we are witnessing not a stalemate but a reaffirmation of a broadly based German consensus that rejects the US social model and imperial power. Pained official silence, experts' bromides and journalists' distortions have been American responses to the election.

WE'RE NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE

■ The postelection autopsies of the Democratic disaster in 2004 are giving way to strategies on how to win in '08 (see Jonathan Schell on page 8). Meanwhile, the best-known of the I-told-you-so books, Tom Franks's *What's the Matter With Kansas?*, which brilliantly argued that working-class folk are voting Republican against their economic interests because the party is right on the social issues, has been challenged by Princeton political scientist Larry Bartels. Analyzing historic voting patterns, he contends that most low-income Democrats have remained loyal to the party and value economic issues above social ones (see Katrina vanden Heuvel's blog at www.thenation.com).

MINORITY/MAJORITY

■ **Permanent Minority.** Appearing recently on NBC's *Meet the Press*, Representative Rahm Emanuel refused to take a concrete position on Iraq that contrasts with George W. Bush's "stay the course" nonsense. Emanuel, chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, said only that Democrats must demand "measurements" and "set standards" and avoid calling for an exit strategy or troop withdrawal, despite polls showing that the American people support such policies.

■ **Toward the Majority.** In a *Washington Post* op-ed, Michigan Senator Carl Levin became the latest high-profile Democrat to indicate support for withdrawing troops from Iraq. In the course of his article Levin made it clear that an exit strategy is a pro–national security position because setting a timetable for withdrawal will provide an added incentive for Iraqis to take responsibility for their own security.

—DAVID SIROTA

NEWS OF THE WEAK IN REVIEW

■ What *was* W.'s real motive for elevating Harriet Miers to the High Bench? Copies of private letters between them when Bush was Texas governor, obtained by the *New York Times*, suggest the answer. Consider this 1997 birthday greetings exchange. MIERS: You are the best governor ever.... Keep up the great work. Texas is blessed. BUSH: I appreciate your friendship and candor—never hold back your sage advice.

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LETTER II JONATHAN SCHELL

How to Lose an Election

As George W. Bush's approval ratings sink below 40 percent, and the GOP and all its projects, from the Iraq War to Social Security "reform" to Hurricane Katrina recovery plans, seem to be going to pieces, we are hearing on every side that it won't be enough for Democrats to rub their hands in glee (however discreetly). They must come up with their own plans. They must offer the country something positive to embrace. One response to this need comes from two former advisers to President Clinton—William Galston, now of the University of Maryland, and Elaine Kamarck, now of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. They have produced a report called *The Politics of Polarization*, a sequel to one they wrote in 1989 for the Democratic Leadership Council. Their main piece of advice, now as before, is that "seizing the center remains the key to victory."

The word "center," of course, has many possible meanings. One is simply the political space where most of the voters are, whatever their views. Defined thus, a centrist strategy is a mere tautology. Any party that wins over a majority of the electorate will have seized "the center": A winning strategy is one that wins. Since the contrary idea—a jolly "let's persuade only 40 percent of the voters!"—is highly unattractive, any "centrist" strategy has an obvious built-in appeal.

A slightly different meaning of the word—and this is the one the authors have in mind—is the collection of specific opinions held by a majority of the voters at a given time. A centrist strategy therefore gears its message to those views, which usually correspond inexactly to the views of either party and so are in a certain way "between them"—in the center. The alternative to this strategy, which Galston and Kamarck reject, is to gear the message to the party "base," its true believers, while hoping somehow to add enough of the less committed voters to win. (These are the "undecided voters," or "swing voters," whose extremely vague or even clueless opinions are often sought around election time in respectful interviews on extremely boring television programs.)

Still another meaning of "the center" is conceivable. It's possible to imagine a truly substantive center comprising calm, reasonable people who, whether they are in a majority or not, reject the violent or insane views of others, defined as extreme. "Center," in this sense, would mean something like "moderate." For example, in Germany in the early 1930s, there were sensible people who were neither Communists nor Nazis. Unfortunately, they were in a minority, as election results showed, and so were not in the center in either of the two previously mentioned senses of the word. (The Nazis were technically in the political center at the time.)

The report's thesis about American politics today, backed by many charts and graphs, is that the party faithful are more polarized than before, meaning that both Republicans and Democrats are more likely to support their party's candidate no matter what. But in such a contest, self-professed "conservatives," who make up 34 percent of the vote, will beat self-professed "liberals," who make up only 21 percent. Therefore Democrats, instead of appealing to their fired-up but fatally slender base, must frame their message to please the large pool of self-styled "moderates," numbering 45 percent. The technicians of the Democratic Party no doubt will be arguing for the next couple of years about whether or not a centrist strategy is really the path to victory.

Another aspect of the report is worth mentioning: *There is scarcely a word in it arguing that the specific policies of a centrist strategy would actually be beneficial for the United States of America or the world.* One might possibly argue that the authors are mere scientists, bound to deliver their objective findings regardless of their personal views. But in fact they step forward as advisers, warmly urging the course of action they define. For example, they write, "Democrats must emphasize the importance of the American military as a potential force for good in the world, and in so doing they need to engage 'Michael Moore Democrats,' who instinctively view American power as suspect."

But the basis for that advice is 100 percent political, and substantive argumentation is 100 percent lacking. There are thousands of words about such matters as decades of voting trends among married women or among Catholics but almost none about any concrete instance in which the military should be employed. The advice to be militarily strong is kept studiously general. Consider the war in Iraq—surely the most urgent issue for the country at the moment. Our authors utter no word for or against it. They do take John Kerry to task for having contradicted himself in the 2004 campaign, by first voting for the war and then voting against funding for the war. But they do not venture to say whether he should have resolved the contradiction by voting against the war or by voting for the funding. (For the record, I was heartbroken when he voted for the war, having hoped that this brave veteran of Vietnam, who with further bravery then opposed that war, would perform a like service opposing the even more disastrous Iraq War.)

Of course, it's hardly startling to discover political strategists scheming to win elections. The phenomenon is as old as democracy. But sixty-four-page reports publicly recommending, without a trace of substantive argumentation, a full-scale strategy for a political party is, I suggest, something new.

In one section the authors declare that the most important consideration for a candidate is "the personality test." They go on, "Candidates who say only what they think others want to hear cannot display strength. Candidates who shift position on what should be matters of conviction cannot pass the integrity tests." To which one must add that in that case no politician who heeds their advice can display strength, for what is their entire report but a hugely sophisticated attempt to discern, from poll results going back a quarter-century, what it is that voters want to hear?

According to their own findings, anyone who takes their advice will lose, and will deserve to lose.

Jonathan Schell is The Nation Institute's Harold Willens Peace Fellow.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

The Virtues of Gas Guzzling

Since I don't believe in "peak oil"—and regard oil "shortages" as contrivances by the oil companies and allied brokers and middlemen to run up the price—I fill my aging fleet of 1950s- and '60s-era Chryslers with a light heart, although for longer trips these days I fill an '82 Mercedes 240D with diesel. True, diesel now costs more than high-octane gasoline, but the Mercedes gets thirty-five miles to the gallon, whereas the '59 Imperial ragtop and the '62 Belvedere wagon get around eighteen mpg, which is still way ahead of the SUVs.

Part of my lightheartedness comes from the fact that gas guzzling can be a revolutionary duty, like puffing Montecristo No. 4 Cuban cigars back in the sixties as a way of doing one's bit for the Cuban revolution. Not so long ago Citgo stations were owned by City Services, which was controlled by the W. Alton Jones family, which through the family foundation exercised—via strategic disbursement—control over much of the environmental movement, such as World Wildlife Fund, National Wildlife Federation and Worldwatch. As with the other big donors like Pew Charitable Trusts, the Alton Jones foundation cut loose any green group showing signs of disruptive militancy.

So I used to give Citgo a wide berth, until Citgo and its 14,000 gas stations and eight oil refineries (undamaged by Katrina) passed into the hands of the Venezuelan national oil company. Alas, Citgo signs aren't a prominent feature of the landscape in Northern California or west of the Rockies. I just drove across Texas, and Citgo outlets are everywhere, as they are in Florida and the Carolinas. But even if you can't pump Citgo, guzzling keeps up overall oil demand, and hence oil prices, thus helping not only Venezuela but also Russia, which needs every ruble it can get.

Not so long ago Chávez said Venezuela could afford to slash Citgo's prices by cutting out the middleman and outlined a plan to set aside 10 percent of the 800,000 barrels of oil produced by the Citgo refineries and ship that oil directly to schools, religious organizations and nonprofits in poor communities for distribution. He has yet to take up my suggestion that Citgo start offering its customers gift vouchers that could be redeemed in the form of free consultations over the Internet with one of the 25,000 Cuban doctors in Venezuela. But surely it's only a matter of time. Already he's made a wildly popular foray into the Bronx and promised social action in the Chicago area as well as along the Gulf Coast. Maybe Bush should throw in the towel and make Chávez the head of FEMA. After all, Chávez is a military man, and Bush wants the military to take a leading role in emergencies.

You might suppose that Citgo's competitors would strike back by raising signs, rather in the manner of some motel owners here battling the Gujarati families controlling 70 percent of the business, urging motorists to patronize "American-owned" filling stations. But that would cut out Shell and BP, and the latter, like ChevronTexaco and ExxonMobil, is in partnership with Petroleos de Venezuela, Venezuela's national oil company, and would not want needlessly to offend the government.

Since the failure of the 2002 coup against Chávez that it backed, the US government has subcontracted its public propaganda against Chávez to Pat Robertson, who, given Reverend Falwell's fade-out, has been trying to consolidate his position as America's leading ayatollah. Robertson promptly overplayed his hand by calling for Chávez's assassination and, most recently, accusing him of planning to build a nuclear arsenal. Someone ought to tell Robertson that accusations pertaining to WMD haven't got a high retail value these days. He'd be better off saying Chávez has labs working on avian flu strains designed to target Protestants of Scottish origin.

Then Chávez wrong-footed Uncle Sam again by telling Ted Koppel that the Pentagon was working on a military coup, Operation Balboa, to overthrow his government. Having learned that pugnacious verbal exchanges only increase Chávez's popularity across Latin America, the US Ambassador in Caracas issued a low-key denial saying, yes, there was an Operation Balboa, but the plan was four years old and Spanish in origin. It had included Venezuela in "a simulated military exercise." This takes us back to the attempted coup of 2002, in which Chávez has accused former Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar of playing a role.

So fill up at Citgo, at least until the price of oil drops and Chávez decides to sell the chain to the Chinese. And what of "peak oil," the theory that oil is about to run out? Since we're all supposed to die of avian flu in the near future, who cares?—as there'll be no one around to work the pumps or even drive up to them. I don't believe in any effective role of man-made CO_2 in global warming, a natural cyclical trend. I think the mad rush to throw money at the pharmaceutical companies for an avian flu vaccine is ridiculous. And increasingly, I don't believe we're about to run out of oil. I hang my hat on the views of Dr. Thomas Gold (founding director of the Cornell University Center for Radiophysics and Space Research) as outlined in his 1999 book, *The Deep Hot Biosphere*. Gold's view, supported by many well-qualified people, is that oil doesn't come from dead dinosaurs and kindred organic matter. Gold argues strongly that oil is a "renewable, primordial soup continually manufactured by the Earth under ultrahot conditions and tremendous pressures. As this substance migrates toward the surface, it is attacked by bacteria, making it appear to have an organic origin dating back to the dinosaurs." Oil, Earth's renewable resource! Ethanol is an attractive alternative, as Brazil is proving. But ethanol will be a tough sell here, so for the time being I'll stay with the winning side.

* * *

Footnote: In my last column I said only one Democrat, Cynthia McKinney, spoke at the Ellipse during the September 24 antiwar rally in Washington. True, so far as the Ellipse is concerned, but later, during the concert, Democratic Representatives Barbara Lee, Maxine Waters, Lynn Woolsey and Raúl Grijalva spoke. Also marching were Representatives Pete Stark and Jay Inslee. ■

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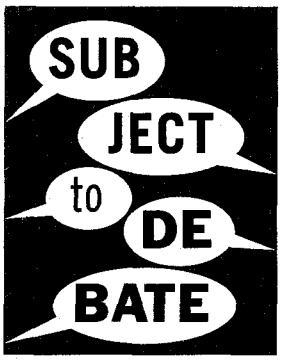
KATHA POLLITT

If Not Miers, Who?



Dear Karl Rove,

I understand you're getting a lot of flak over the nomination of Harriet Miers to that pesky slot on the Supreme Court. Just in case it doesn't work out, I would like to propose another candidate: me. I realize my name might not be on your short list, since this is a new ambition of mine, and I haven't had time to organize a big shmoozy campaign like some people I could mention. It was actually the Miers nomination that gave me the idea—some people thought, Why her?, but I thought, Why not me? To save time in case you have to move quickly, I've prepared a list of reasons I would be the perfect person to refute the kinds of nasty, rude, unfair arguments being made by Ms. Miers's opponents. I think you will see I have all her strengths, and then some!

1. I am a woman and, moreover, have been one for years. I realize that means I will be subjected to a lot of sexist comments: The media will do silly pieces about my cooking and clothes and whether I am really as bad a mother as all that. Your enemies, of course, will say you chose me because of my sex. Here's the perfect double-whammy defense: While Laura Bush suggests that anyone who criticizes me is a creepy misogynist, which happens to be what I think too (perhaps she could also mention that my daughter has no actual criminal record and surely that counts for something), you point out that there are currently around 113 million adult women in the United States. Obviously if you just wanted a woman, you would never have chosen me. You would have chosen one of those other women—a reactionary judge like Edith Jones or Priscilla Owen, or maybe Jennifer Aniston because Brad has been so mean.

2. I am not a Christian. This may not strike you as an advantage, given the nature of your base, but think about it. Right now, the Christian right is split: James Dobson says you told him something on the phone about Miers that reassured him greatly, but Gary Bauer doubts she is "a vote for our values." At Miers's own evangelical church, the congregation stood up and applauded; but at other churches the pews are in revolt. Honestly, who can figure these people out? They only stopped burning each other at the stake a few centuries ago. Nominating me will unify them instantly: I'm a half-Jewish half-Episcopalian atheist. When they make a fuss, just tell them God told the President to pick me. Given the other advice God's been giving him—to invade Iraq, for example—it could even be true.

3. I am not a lawyer. George Will and William Kristol and a lot of other pundits complain that Miers isn't qualified for the Court because she's not a judge, and her area of legal expertise is serving the President, which is not the same as constitutional law—at least not yet. In my opinion these whiners are just elitist lawyer-haters. But you know what? Everyone seems to hate lawyers, so why not throw George and Bill a bone and nominate me? You'll please the snobs who pooh-pooh Miers's lack of credentials—I have many credentials; they just happen to be in areas other than the law—and you'll please the populists, who don't think credentials matter. That seems to be your guiding philosophy too—Michael Brown went from horses to hurricanes, Karen Hughes is traipsing about the Middle East marketing America to Muslims—and who is to say you're wrong? As Oklahoma Senator Tom Coburn observed in defense of Julie Myers, nominated to head the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency despite her complete lack of relevant experience, "She doesn't know what can't be done." I can promise you, neither do I!

4. I am not a woman of mystery. Everyone's trying to figure out Miers's views on abortion. We know she's against it—she goes to an antichoice church; she gave money to Texans United for Life; when she was president of the Texas Bar Association in the early 1990s she lobbied to get the ABA to rescind its official support for *Roe v. Wade*. But is she really, really against it? The President tried to calm his base by saying he knew her and she would never change, wink-wink. But that was just confusing. After all, she changed once—she used to be a Catholic and a Democrat, and in 1998 she even helped start a feminist lecture series at Southern Methodist University (first speaker: Gloria Steinem)—so how can the President be so sure she won't change again? You could turn around one day and see her sitting up there, next to Antonin Scalia, in a burqa. My views on abortion, by contrast, are a matter of endless, possibly even tedious, record, and they have been the same since I knew what abortion was. There will be no need to play the old game of trying to persuade both sides that the candidate is with them without actually saying what the candidate thinks. If people ask you what my position on abortion is, you can just tell them!

What else? Unlike Miers, no one can say I'm a crony—I've never even met the President, and the only Republicans I know were so disgusted by the Katrina thing they might as well be Democrats—in fact, don't laugh, it could happen. Another plus: I'm a quick study, so I'm not too worried about the learning curve if I get on the Bench. Besides, the Constitution isn't very long; I could probably even memorize it if that would help me bond with the other Justices. The President says he expects the Court merely to apply the law, not make the law, and that doesn't sound very difficult, does it? The Justices probably go on about what a tough job they have just so we'll think they're so smart. But if I do have questions, I can always ask Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Looking forward to hearing from you, perhaps sooner than you think!

Sincerely yours,

Katha Pollitt

cc: President George W. Bush ■

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ARTICLES

IS THE TERMINATOR IN FREE-FALL?

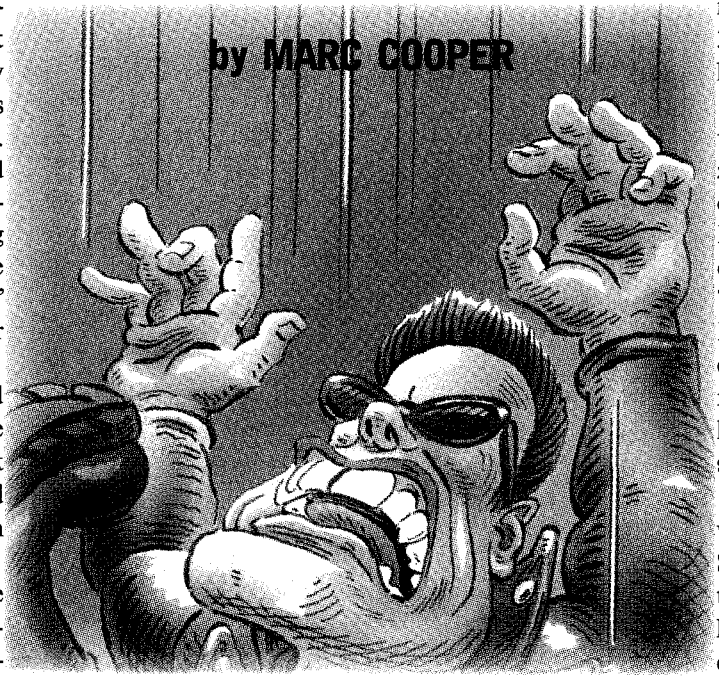
by MARC COOPER

Anaheim, California

As Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger was readying himself to address the featured luncheon at the GOP state convention held in mid-September in a Disneyland-area hotel, the assembled Republican troops were atwitter. Last-minute sales of conservative paraphernalia outside the doors of the ballroom where the governor would speak were brisk. T-shirts of George W. Bush in his now infamous flight suit sold alongside bumper stickers reading LIBERALISM IS A MENTAL DISORDER and GUN CONTROL IS A STEADY HAND.

When the tanned and beaming Governator finally appeared onstage, he was received like, well, a world-famous movie star—the nearly 500 guests rose to their feet and cheered loudly and repeatedly. There wasn't much suspense in Schwarzenegger's brief address. The day before, he'd announced he was running for re-election, a full fourteen months before next year's vote. And he'd been making headlines for months by calling for a special election on November 8 and supporting three measures that would enhance his budget authority, extend probation for new teachers and impose a new way to redraw electoral districts.

But the governor did throw out one big newsmaker to the crowd and the attendant media. Vowing to confront the "union bosses that run the state," he officially endorsed a fourth measure, Proposition 75, a so-called "paycheck protection" initiative that would severely curtail the ability of state public-employee unions to make large political donations. "Big government unions should not use members' funds as a personal kitty," he said to roaring approval. "Union bosses have too much power over members' paychecks and too much power over our state."



As the delegates chanted "Four more years! Four more years!" USC political analyst Sherry Bebitch Jeffe whispered to me: "We have just moved from all-out war to Armageddon."

Indeed, by coming out for the antilabor measure, Schwarzenegger has guaranteed that the special election will be a nationalized free-for-all. With union contributions the veritable lifeblood of the California Democratic Party, the election promises to be an astronomically expensive political food-fight, a do-or-die referendum on the governor himself. Schwarzenegger is scrambling to add another $20 million, including as much as $5 million of his own money, to the $30 million he has already collected and spent. An alliance of California labor unions has raised more than $60 million. Big Pharma is expected to spend $80 million defending one of its own favored initiatives—countering a competing initiative that would provide low-cost prescription drugs—in the special election. The cost of the voting itself has been estimated to be between $45 million and $80 million.

The blinding golden glare off these stacks of cash illuminates the fix that California's once wildly popular governor now finds himself in. His 2003 recall-election campaign triumphantly culminated on the steps of the Sacramento Capitol with 10,000 supporters, many waving brooms in the air. This new outsider governor would sweep away politics-as-usual, send the special interests packing and inaugurate an era of populist bipartisan reform.

Two years later Schwarzenegger has raised more corporate cash than any previous California governor. He finds himself persistently dogged by union-led demonstrators as he campaigns full-time for a special election that 60 percent of voters say is unnecessary, and for a highly partisan agenda that, like him, is failing in the polls. No wonder Schwarzenegger's favorability rating now slumps at a miserable 35 percent, an anemic half of its high point two years ago.

Earlier this year, in a scenario that's become routine, Schwarzenegger's commencement address at his alma mater, Santa Monica College, was drowned out by a half-hour of jeering. The hero's reception at the state Republican convention was an exception to what's become the rule. Increasingly, the only friendly crowds he's finding are partisan and handpicked.

"Arnold is burning his ships with no way back," attorney Shawn Steel, a former chair of the state GOP, told me jubilantly after Schwarzenegger completed his Anaheim speech endorsing Prop 75. "He's put everything on the table. And it's wonderful!"

It's also the problem for Schwarzenegger. The worst place a statewide California Republican can find himself in is hostage to

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the party base—a constituency that amounts to about a third of the state's voters. Schwarzenegger claims he remains "bloody but unbowed" from this past season of political warfare, and he vows he's now battling to "reform the entire system." But at best he is now fighting, uphill, for his mere political survival.

"His whole operation failed to learn the lessons of the recall election," says veteran Democratic strategist Bill Carrick. "As long as voters thought he was some sort of different, progressive Republican, different from the Beltway Republicans, as long as he was pro-environment, pro-gay and so on, he was riding high. But now that he's veered into inheriting the old worn-out Republican agenda, he's in deep trouble."

The Good Arnold

It didn't have to be this way. For a brief historical moment, at least, it seemed as though Schwarzenegger was going to scramble the state's partisan lines and reorder Sacramento politics.

Heading into next month's special election, it's clear that that moment has passed. The governor has spent much of 2005 scurrying to shore up the red-meat Republican base. He vetoed a gay marriage bill, a raise in the minimum wage and a measure that would have given driver's licenses to the undocumented. He's also favoring a parental-notification abortion initiative.

But simply writing Schwarzenegger off as "Pete Wilson with a smile" or one more run-of-the-mill "Bush Republican"—as some of his critics have—is as mistaken as suggesting that his dour pay-to-play predecessor, Gray Davis, was somehow a progressive. Little more than a year ago, some of California's most powerful unions sent their members into the state capitol to lobby *for* Schwarzenegger's renegotiated compacts with Indian tribes, which made union recognition a make-or-break issue. "Arnold walked the walk," an organizer for the hotel workers' union, told me at the time. "Other governors," she said, referring to Gray Davis, "merely talked the talk."

Schwarzenegger has also supported pro-farmworker measures that Davis and his predecessors had left to languish. He has taken a decidedly more liberal position than Davis on criminal sentencing and correctional reform. And even as he vetoed the gay marriage bill a few weeks ago, he signed four other measures that strengthened civil unions.

Forty percent of Schwarzenegger's judicial nominees have been Democrats. Four of his twelve Cabinet secretaries are also Democrats; one is an independent. And while some of his more recent moves have angered the green lobby, the governor named a prominent environmentalist to head the California EPA, fought for expanded solar power and successfully championed a global-warming measure that went far beyond the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol. Schwarzenegger and the overwhelmingly Democratic state legislature wound up jointly supporting several budget-balancing measures and workers' compensation reform.

But even while those measures were sailing to passage last year, the governor made it clear that he'd be willing to use his soaring popularity and go directly to the voters in a referendum if the compromises didn't continue.

The Bad Arnold

All the bipartisan good vibes came to a crashing halt at the beginning of this year. In a blustering, swaggering State of the State speech, Arnold unveiled his so-called Year of Reform agenda and issued what sounded like an ultimatum to the legislative Democrats: either rubber-stamp it or face a special election, which he could easily win.

That he had recently called these same legislators "Girlie Men" didn't help. Nor did his new agenda, which demanded approval of measures that would roll back pensions of state employees, extend the probationary period of teachers under the guise of educational reform and give Arnold more budget authority over the legislature. His proposal to transfer redistricting power from lawmakers to a panel of retired judges—a worthy notion that at least edges away from partisan gerrymandering—ticked off Republicans as well as Democrats.

After spending his first year virtually unopposed, the governor ran into immediate political gunfire. His pension reform proposal was so poorly drafted that it denied benefits to police widows; Schwarzenegger was forced to withdraw that measure quickly. Then he bumbled right into an unanticipated war. California nurses were angered by his opposition to lowering patient-to-nurse ratios, and they protested loudly. The governor returned the favor early this year, saying publicly of the nurses that he was "kicking their butts." The California Nurses Association began infiltrating his fundraising events and booing him.

All of a sudden the anti-Arnold movement caught fire. Tens of millions of dollars in labor-funded commercials derided Schwarzenegger's reform agenda as heartless and cast the governor as a man who went back on his promises. The spots, featuring a perplexed fireman, police officer or teacher, ended with the tag line, "Not the governor we thought you'd be."

"He made a lot of rookie mistakes," says Los Angeles Republican consultant Allan Hoffenblum. "You can't attack the public-employee unions in this state without looking like you're attacking nurses, teachers and cops—people that Californians have warm feelings about."

The Ugly Arnold

Under the relentless attacks, Team Arnold—the political operation around the governor—seemed to evaporate this spring as quickly as his popularity ratings declined. Longtime Sacramento watchers could no longer figure out who was in charge as the governor's office fell into a political abyss. And Schwarzenegger kept digging himself in deeper, railing at public employees as "special interests"—a laughable notion—as he traveled nationwide raising corporate money for his special election.

In an act of cold desperation trying to raise sagging poll numbers, Schwarzenegger briefly jumped into bed with the anti-immigrant Minutemen. The romance lasted only one news cycle, but its deadly aftereffects are still taking their toll. Arnold's once-significant popularity among Latino voters has been obliterated.

"The governor allowed himself to become the vessel for the

Marc Cooper, a Nation *contributing editor, serves as a senior fellow at the Institute for Justice and Journalism at the USC Annenberg School for Communication.*

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interests of his staff and his political consultants," says Scott Schmidt, an activist with the Log Cabin Republicans and a continuing supporter of Schwarzenegger. "His mistake has been to have the public perception that this is Pete Wilson's third term. When he got into trouble this year, first thing he did was turn to immigration. That wasn't the Arnold Schwarzenegger we knew."

Meanwhile, ugly conflicts of interest—which had occasionally bobbed to the surface—erupted into public view. The *Los Angeles Times*, expanding on reporting done by *Slate*, ran stories on the governor's cozy relationship with American Media Inc., owners of the *National Enquirer* and several body-building magazines. On the eve of being sworn into office, Schwarzenegger had signed a lucrative editorial-consulting contract with AMI—odd enough for a governor. But as the *LA Times* revealed in full detail this past summer, AMI was apparently paying out hush money to people with embarrassing or damaging stories to tell about Arnold. "We were protecting him," said a former American Media exec. The governor severed his contract with the tabloid company. But the damage had been done. Polling over the summer showed that as his popularity sank, so did support for his ballot measures.

'Arnold is burning his ships with no way back,' says a former state GOP chair. 'And it's wonderful!'

More than one political operative close to Schwarzenegger said over the summer that the governor was ready to make a deal with the Democratic legislature to call off the November 8 balloting. There were some last-minute marathon negotiations in August with the Democratic leadership. In the end, neither side blinked. The more ideological faction of the governor's staff, urging a confrontation, prevailed. Meanwhile, the Democratic legislature, recognizing that the multimillion-dollar television onslaught against Schwarzenegger was panning out to be one of the most successful in recent history, saw little reason to bail him out with a compromise. The special election that virtually no one had asked for, and few supported, was on.

"I think some of Arnold's staff drank the Kool-Aid that he could win anything he brought directly before the voters," says Democratic consultant Carrick. "And it's wrong to think that it's just Arnold's unpopularity that is dragging down these propositions. It's their actual substance. Voters look at them and say, 'What's this got to do with anything?'"

He'll Be Back—or Will He?

The three ballot measures that Schwarzenegger has endorsed all along are lagging in the polls. That bodes ill for Arnold's Year of Reform, since California propositions typically lose strength toward election day. The parental-notification initiative is a close call, though, and union officials express growing worry that with balloting by mail already under way, and unions having been slow to educate their members about the consequences of Arnold's antiunion initiative, "paycheck protection" might be headed for passage.

"One of two things is going to happen," says Republican consultant Hoffenblum. "First scenario is this election degenerates into a fight between both party bases, a contest over who can turn out the most hard-core supporters." With the Democrats' sizable edge in party affiliation, that scenario would be grim for Schwarzenegger. "Second scenario is that Arnold is able to motivate some soft Democrats and independents by persuading them that redistricting and taking power away from the legislature are important issues." But that, says Hoffenblum, will be "very, very difficult" for the governor to pull off.

You'd think this sort of Republican gloominess would brighten the hearts of California Democrats. And you'd be right. But only in the short run. A recall effort, launched in October, is unlikely to get anywhere. And while the smart money figures on Schwarzenegger getting whipped in his own special election next month, most observers on both sides—at least in private—concede he's still the odds-on favorite for re-election a year from now.

The two declared Democratic candidates, State Controller Steve Westly and State Treasurer Phil Angelides, have little name recognition in populous Southern California. Westley is a wealthy Silicon Valley entrepreneur, and Angelides is a wealthy Northern California developer. Further complicating matters, the centrist Westley, a former eBay executive, is seen by many liberals as being too pro-business; Angelides's Bay Area liberalism might get in the way of attracting swing voters.

Little surprise, then, that so far Schwarzenegger's strongest Democratic critic has been his Hollywood compadre Warren Beatty. Sounding a tad like his movie character Jay Bulworth, Beatty has in the past few months verbally trounced Arnold in university and union venues, arguing that the governor "misled" Californians with his initial moderate pitch.

Beatty, whose political activism dates back to the 1960s, is an unlikely long shot to actually run against Schwarzenegger. But he told me he's not completely ruling it out. "Being as meticulously truthful as possible," Beatty said, "I'm saying I don't want to run for governor. But I do believe in public service, in giving back. We have two good men out there who have announced their intention to run against Arnold. But I don't close the door."

Actor-director Rob Reiner has also recently been refloated as a possible Democratic challenger. But Beatty and Reiner both have to be aware that if Arnold rose to power by celebrity, it is that same celebrity that is also doing him in. "He came in with a lot of theater," Beatty told me. "But theater isn't enough."

Schwarzenegger's action-hero promises to be an un-politician were accepted by voters who believed that only someone with superhuman status could come though. Those promises raised initial voter expectations to Himalayan heights. The ensuing disappointment and disenchantment with him has fallen into equally deep crevasses.

Even if Arnold survives next month's balloting and goes on to win next year's re-election, it's not uncharitable to say that he has nevertheless already lost. If he wins another term, it will be not as an extraordinary vehicle of hope and reform but rather as an oil-burning jalopy of politics-as-usual. It will be re-election not of the beloved onscreen Terminator but of the human Arnold, one more mediocre Republican governor beholden to powerful and partisan special interests. ■

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"THE METH EPIDEMIC ...AMERICA'S MOST DANGEROUS DRUG"

-- Newsweek[1]

METHAMPHETAMINE CRISIS: HYPE OR FACT?

"This is the beginning of a classic scare where you have horrible anecdotes substituted for epidemiological evidence and the media going with these easy stories," says Dr. Craig Reinarman of the University of California. "You don't want to mistake the worst case scenarios for the norm but that is what happens and it's true of every drug scare."[2]

IS USE EXPANDING?

The federal government's own numbers show that "Incidence of methamphetamine use generally rose between 1992 and 1998. Since then, there have been no statistically significant changes."[3]

HOW MANY METH USERS ARE THERE?

About 5% of Americans older than 12 have tried the drug. About 0.3% have actually used it in the last month, versus 0.1% for heroin and 1.0% for cocaine.[4]

CAN METH BE TREATED SUCCESSFULLY?

Research shows successful treatment requires a significant commitment of time and resources as well as patience.[5,6,7]

HOW BIG IS THE "HOME COOKING" PROBLEM?

Illegal activity is tough to measure but some officials estimate that about 20% of domestic meth consumption comes from the small-scale domestic labs using cold medications and other household materials.[8]

HOW EFFECTIVE ARE RESTRICTIONS ON "HOME COOKING" CHEMICALS?

Since Oklahoma restricted the sale of cold and allergy medicines officials report a 90% drop in meth lab seizures. Unfortunately the Mexican cartels immediately filled the gap. Seizures of a purer, smokeable form of methamphetamine known as "ice" are up 500%.[9]

Policy Should Reflect Facts, Not Hype!

COMMON SENSE FOR DRUG POLICY
H. Michael Gray, Chair; Robert E. Field, Co-Chair
www.CSDP.org, www.DrugWarFacts.org, www.DrugWarDistortions.org

1. Newsweek, Aug. 8, 2005. 2. "The Methamphetamine Epidemic – Less Than Meets The Eye," Drug War Chronicle, Aug. 5, 2005. 3. Results from the 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, SAMHSA (2004). 4. Ibid. 5. Rawson, Richard A., et al., "A multi-site comparison of psychological approaches for the treatment of methamphetamine dependence," Addiction, No. 99, pp. 708-717. 6."The Matrix Model of Outpatient Stimulant Abuse Treatment: History and Description," Obert, Jeanne L., et al., Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, April-June 2000. 7. Methamphetamine Treatment Project at http://www.methamphetamine.org/ . 8. Commissioner Michael Campion, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, US House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy & Human Resources, June 27, 2005. 9. "Stopping Meth Makers Hasn't Stopped Oklahoma's Meth Problems," AP July 28, 2005.

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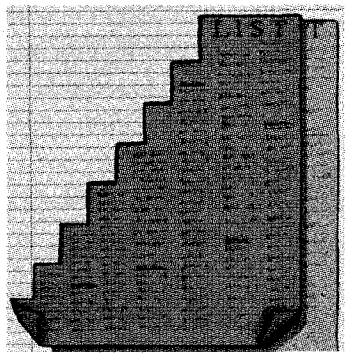
HOW CAN THE LEFT BUILD A NEW MAJORITY? EMILY'S LIST HAS A BIG PIECE OF THE ANSWER.

Spreading the Dough

RUTH CONNIFF

Everything about freshman Congresswoman Gwen Moore is fabulous—from her rhinestone glasses and her cackling laugh to her passionate grassroots politics and blunt outspokenness (something the professional handlers, if they can get hold of her, might try to tamp down). Moore represents Wisconsin's Fourth Congressional District in Milwaukee, with areas of black unemployment as high as 59 percent. She's the second woman and the first African-American the state has ever sent to the nation's Capitol.



KAREN CALDICOTT

When Moore was a young single mother of three, the repo man came for the washer and dryer she got from the local rent-to-own shop. "I'd paid for it two or three times, I'm sure," she says. "That's how it works." In response, Moore organized a march on her local bank and helped form a community development credit union. Today she's on the House Financial Services committee.

If you want progressive politics, Moore has the whole package. She fought for women's reproductive rights as a state senator. She battled former governor Tommy Thompson over his welfare "reform" experiments and still gets worked up when she talks about it: "Ten thousand women got kicked out of college and technical college!" (Moore herself finished college while on welfare.) She's a big supporter of labor. She's also, perhaps surprisingly, a star candidate for EMILY's List, the political action committee best known for using the power of the purse to propel such heavy hitters as senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein to "Year of the Woman" victories.

As EMILY's List—the name is an acronym for Early Money Is Like Yeast (it makes the dough rise…)—turns twenty this year, it has built an impressive track record with its innovative fundraising and its simple mission of electing prochoice, Democratic women to office. The group has helped elect sixty-one women to the House and eleven to the Senate, along with eight governors and hundreds of state officeholders. Members gave $10.7 million to EMILY's List candidates in the last election cycle, making it the wealthiest PAC in America.

But EMILY's List has not been known for working with grassroots, progressive campaigns. So when the group began calling Moore during her primary, she says, frankly, "I was irritated." When the group had reached out to a woman candidate for governor in Wisconsin, Moore says, "They courted her and talked to her and smiled, and in the end they didn't do much." Moore figured EMILY's List wouldn't put any real energy into her race either, especially since she was running against other prochoice Democrats. She finally agreed to go to lunch with an EMILY's List representative, whom she told, "I know all about you. You're the people waiting on the shoreline with the warm towels and the hot chocolate *after* the woman swims the English Channel."

To Moore's surprise, EMILY's List put more than $685,000 into Wisconsin last year—not only helping send her to Washington but filling the State Senate seat she left behind with another African-American woman, Lena Taylor. EMILY's List also helped a third candidate, Tamara Grigsby, win Taylor's seat in the State Assembly. "I was stunned that they got in and they got in as deeply as they did," says Moore. EMILY's List supported Moore not so much because of her progressive values, but because she was a viable candidate. With the group's expert advice, Moore built her own crack fundraising operation—a good thing, because she didn't have a dime of her own to put into the race. No one was more surprised by it all than Tamara Grigsby, a social worker whose initial thought when her friend Lena Taylor suggested that she run to fill her State Assembly seat was, "You must be crazy!"

The trifecta of victories in Wisconsin illustrates a favorite point for EMILY's List—that by working together, women can achieve more in politics than they thought possible. But the broader lesson is about taking back the country from the right. Especially since 2004, progressives have been talking about the need to replicate the right-wing takeover of American politics. After Barry Goldwater's crushing defeat in 1964, the hard right began a long march to power, taking over local school boards and Republican Party machinery, grooming candidates for higher office, building networks, coordinating strategy.

How can the left begin *its* march back to power? EMILY's List has a big piece of the answer. The group is doing work long neglected by both the Democratic Party and progressive groups: training and funding political newcomers to get them into office, then helping them move up.

From the beginning, women's status as political outsiders spurred EMILY's List's entrepreneurial approach. When it started in 1985, at a "Rolodex party" in founder Ellen Malcolm's basement, the goal was to help Maryland's Barbara Mikulski become the first Democratic woman to win a Senate election (other Democratic women had served by appointment). Malcolm's innovation was "bundling" contributions—getting members to write small checks to individual candidates, which the group then pools for maximum impact. Two decades later, there are more than 100,000 members who write checks averaging $93 each election year to candidates EMILY's List supports.

The group's mission has evolved with the political landscape. In the 1990s EMILY's List began training candidates. When the candidates had trouble finding professional fundraisers and

Ruth Conniff is political editor of The Progressive.

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The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer

The timeless epics of Homer—memorably explored in 24 recorded lectures

When John Keats first read Chapman's translation of the epics of "deep-brow'd Homer," he was so overwhelmed, so overcome with the joy of discovery, that he compared his experience to finding "a new planet." When you join award-winning classics professor Elizabeth Vandiver of the Whitman College for these lectures on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey,* you will come away understanding what enthralled Keats and has gripped so many readers of Homer.

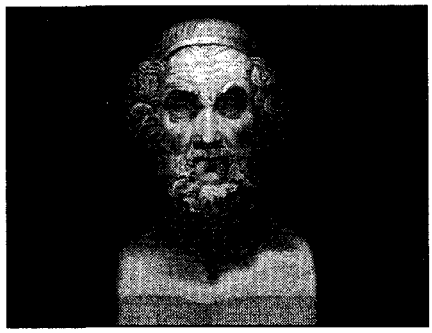
Professor Vandiver makes it vividly clear why, after almost 3,000 years, the Homeric epics remain not only among the greatest adventure stories ever told, but also two of the most compelling meditations on the human condition ever written. Indeed, it is probably true to say that only the Bible rivals Homer for sheer depth and scope of cultural and literary influence.

How is this so? The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are long-dead epochs that seem utterly alien to us. Indeed, the Bronze Age Aegean was a distant memory even to the original audiences of these works.

Yet the grandeur and immediacy of the Homeric world seem to defy time and space. The bard depicts a legendary era in brilliant, unforgettable hues. And he peoples it with towering heroes who thirst for honor and fight shattering wars; voyage to strange lands on the shores of wine-dark seas; deal face-to-face with gods and monsters; and act out awesome passions for glory, love, and vengeance.

Or perhaps age seems only to burnish the luster of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* precisely because of their very strangeness and distance, which throw timeless human issues so sharply into focus.

These issues are evoked, in each poem, by the power of a single dramatic question: In the *Iliad,* why does Achilles rage? In the *Odyssey,* why does Odysseus long so powerfully to go home? Around these questions the bard weaves a narrative that makes us ask many things, including: What are the limits of our freedom? What shapes our actions and our ends? Why do we love our own so strongly? Where is the line between justice and revenge? And above all, what does it mean to be alive?



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Homer.

Professor Vandiver builds her analyses skillfully around meticulous, insightful examinations of the most important episodes in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.* She explains the cultural assumptions that lie behind Homer's lines, and you'll join her in weighing the basic critical and interpretive issues. She probes the relationship of the epics to traditional, orally transmitted poetry and surveys the archaeological evidence for an actual conflict.

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staff, EMILY's List began training them, too. By 1995 the PAC had launched its Women Vote! project, which last year put $10 million into voter mobilization. In 2001, when women's representation in state government had begun to decline for the first time, EMILY's List began reaching "down ballot" to recruit and train candidates for state offices. Its Political Opportunity Program has so far trained 3,200 women, helping 217 get elected to statewide office in twenty-nine states.

Now Karen White, EMILY's List's political director, is in the middle of a ten-year plan to help the Democrats control as many state legislatures and governor's mansions as possible in time for Congressional redistricting after the 2010 Census. (With an eye on redistricting, the group is now putting male incumbents in New York through its patented training.) "In 2004 all people could talk about was the presidential election," says White. "But we were continuing to build a farm team." In five states where legislative chambers flipped from Republican to Democratic control in 2004, EMILY's List played a pivotal role—nowhere more than in Colorado. After John Kerry's campaign pulled out, judging the state a lost cause, EMILY's List continued to pour resources into the races of thirteen women. All thirteen won, as both houses went Democratic. For the first time, both the Colorado speaker pro tempore of the House and the president of the Senate are women.

'EMILY's List is absolutely a model' nationally, but 'it makes more sense to put money into the very local level,' says a grassroots organizer.

EMILY's List training sessions are the heart of its effort to build its "farm team," combining the inspirational power of a consciousness-raising group with professional nuts-and-bolts instruction. At a recent candidate training session in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, regional director Tanya Bjork offered EMILY's List's standard uplifting slogan, "When Women Run, Women Win." Bjork cited a Brown University study showing that men are almost twice as likely than women to consider themselves "highly qualified" for office—even though women candidates do just as well as men at the polls.

One of the featured speakers was the charismatic new state senator from Milwaukee, Lena Taylor—Gwen Moore's successor. At a Friday evening dinner, she grasped the hand of Ame Grail, a realtor from Door County, a tourist mecca in northern Wisconsin. Grail is brand-new to politics, getting ready to run for State Assembly because she is concerned about the environment. "There is so much E. coli on the beaches, our children can't swim," she said. "I commend your courage!" Taylor told Grail. "I and others will be there for you when you run. You go through a lot and have to know you have a sisterhood of elected officials."

That feeling of "sisterhood" is evident throughout the EMILY's List candidate training. Women share information and laugh about common problems—especially the particular forms of insecurity and overpoliteness that plague some female candidates. At a training session last spring in Arizona, Ann Liston of EMILY's List asked participants to role-play candidates asking donors for money. (EMILY's List asked that I protect the participants' anonymity.) First, Liston gave the group a pep talk about how Ellen Malcolm has raised tens of millions of dollars in her career. Her method: Break the ice, chat about your shared political goals, then cut to the "ask"—very directly, for a specific amount of money. Then stop talking. Don't say another word.

It sounds easy. But as the candidates began trying to do it in the role-playing session, it was anything but. They ran right over the "ask," apologizing, even bringing up reasons the donor might not want to support them. A shy woman with long dark hair choked when the "donor" asked why she shouldn't support her opponent. "Oh, she's a master of manipulation!" she blurted out, turning beet red. "The phone is your friend," Liston said kindly. "If you blush a lot, stick with the phone." Another candidate began her role-play by folding her arms across her chest and declaring, "You all can't laugh at me!"

In each case Liston followed the same script: Get the group to comment first on what the candidate had done well, then ever so gently work in some constructive criticism. "You have to make sure you're not talking down to these women," Bjork explains. "You don't want to undermine their confidence." Even the most unsteady neophytes improve dramatically with practice, she says, and can blossom into great candidates. Take it from Ellen Malcolm, who was not always a fundraising legend. "I used to be scared to death," she says. "My knees would shake. I'd think, I hope nobody notices."

The fundraising success of EMILY's List had made it a model even for the right. "We copied some of their tactics, especially the concept of bundling small contributions," says David Keating of the Club for Growth, a conservative PAC that supports candidates who favor tax cuts and smaller government. But while EMILY's List is mainly concerned with getting more women to run for office—and win—PACs like the Club for Growth, and like the Progressive Majority on the left, support candidates who reflect a political ideology. EMILY's List focuses on winning more seats for prochoice, Democratic women. Period. Which raises a legitimate question: Are these women leading the country in a more progressive direction?

The EMILY's List offices take up most of the eleventh floor of a big building on Connecticut Avenue in Washington, DC. The walls are lined with the photos of women the group has helped elect. No longer political outsiders, many of these women now represent the mainstream of the Democratic Party—Hillary Clinton, Dianne Feinstein, Mary Landrieu. Even on choice, the only litmus-test issue for EMILY's List, some of them—most notably Hillary Clinton (she of the "sad, even tragic choice" speech)—have retreated, rhetorically at least.

Malcolm is careful not to criticize Hillary, except to say that Democrats have, in her view, "misread" the polling on "values voters" after 2004. If Senator Clinton runs for President, EMILY's List will be "delighted," Malcolm says—behind her 100 percent. "If you want a more progressive America," Malcolm argues, "your best bet is to elect more prochoice, Democratic women." But surely there's more to it than that.

In some races EMILY's List has actually backed the less progressive candidate. In last year's gubernatorial primary in Washington, for example, the group helped knock out King County executive Ron Sims, who favored abolishing the regres-

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sive sales tax in favor of a more equitable statewide income tax. The EMILY's List candidate, Christine Gregoire—who won after a long recount—was the more cautious, centrist candidate.

Dean Nielsen, Washington State director of Progressive Majority, found the race frustrating. "Their model worked beautifully. The early money *was* like yeast," he says. But the upshot was the defeat of a viable progressive. Nielsen also says he doesn't see EMILY's List putting much emphasis on candidate recruitment at the grassroots. "Are they out there every day beating the bushes for candidates? No," he says. "Their contribution is primarily financial." And the group's "bundled" contributions go only to federal candidates.

That criticism is echoed by Mandy Carter, a longtime grassroots organizer and former member of the Democratic National Committee from North Carolina. "EMILY's List is absolutely a model" for their national work, Carter says. But like many progressives fed up with Democratic centrism, Carter counts herself among those who think "it makes more sense to put money into the very local level, where there's a lot of energy and excitement—not so much as you move up."

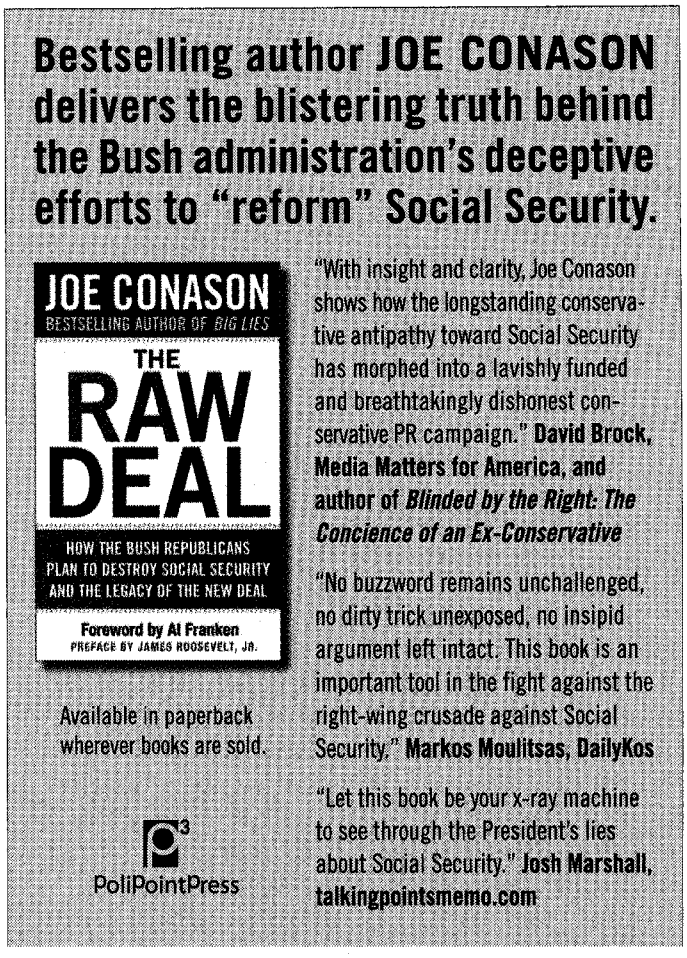
EMILY's List's achievement, thus far, has been to move one disenfranchised group—women—into power. "We all bow to the feet of EMILY's List in terms of their effectiveness and what they've accomplished for women," says Progressive Majority's executive director, Gloria Totten. "Do they have women in their ranks who we wouldn't consider progressive? Absolutely." Unlike EMILY's List, Progressive Majority supports only candidates who score 100 percent on a forty-question quiz covering issues like economic justice and the environment. But Progressive Majority works only in a handful of states—with candidates for local office, like City Council, that EMILY's List won't touch.

EMILY's List does occasionally partner with progressive groups like Totten's. The candidate training in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, was a joint effort, for instance. More notably, Malcolm co-founded America Coming Together, the progressive coalition that launched a massive voter-outreach effort for Democrats in 2004. She continues to meet weekly with a coalition of more than thirty progressive groups called America Votes to share information, strategy and research.

Those efforts are essential, because when it comes to building a coordinated strategy to take back power in the states, the Democratic Party has left the field wide open. "The lack of infrastructure-building by the party has created a need that we have just moved in to fill," says Malcolm. DNC chair Howard Dean agrees. "When I came in, because of my own experience in the presidential campaign, I believed we needed to do what EMILY's List is doing," he says. Under Dean, the DNC is putting paid organizers in every state to work on party-building. Teaming with EMILY's List and with younger progressive groups, Dean wants to get the Democrats to reconnect with the grassroots.

That means finding more candidates like Gwen Moore, who says of her campaign for Congress, "Whenever I would get discouraged, I'd see the faces of the people who were going to have no voice in government if I weren't elected. A lot of them were female. A lot of them were people of color. And a lot of them were white, and they were poor. And they didn't matter. They just were obscure."

If it's up to her, it won't stay that way. ■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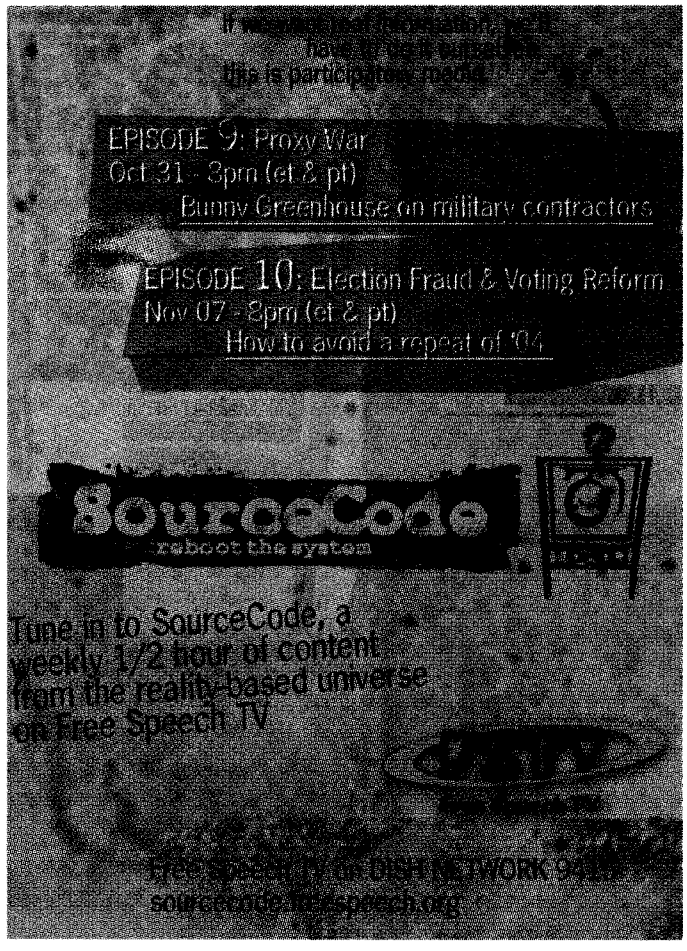
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Letter From the Philippines

by Walden Bello

THE END OF PEOPLE POWER?

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Manila

"People power" used to be synonymous with the Philippines. In February 1986 Filipinos captured the imagination of the world when they rushed into the streets to support a military uprising and ousted strongman Ferdinand Marcos. Fifteen years later, in January 2001, they again surged into the streets to bring down President Joseph Estrada, widely believed to be the recipient of hundreds of millions of pesos from illegal gambling activities.

Today, however, they are largely absent while another president stands accused, this time of stealing elections.

Intercepted telephone conversations between President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and an electoral commissioner during the elections of May 2004 showed her attempting to influence the outcome of the polls. Unable to deny it was her voice on the taped intercepts, Arroyo publicly apologized for a "lapse in judgment." But instead of defusing the situation, the admission triggered widespread calls for her to resign.

In early September 2005, nearly three months after the scandal broke, Arroyo blocked a bid to impeach her, clinging to power despite a recent poll giving her the lowest overall performance rating among the country's five most recent presidents. Those numbers were not, however, translated into numbers in the streets. The biggest rally anti-Arroyo forces could muster numbered, at most, 40,000. In contrast, hundreds of thousands had clogged the main highway running through Manila, popularly known as EDSA, for days on end in 1986 and 2001.

What happened? asked Manila's veteran street activists. Why were the people no longer protesting a clear-cut case of electoral fraud by a president who was already vastly unpopular owing to ineptitude, uninspiring leadership and widely believed allegations of corruption even before the telephone intercepts surfaced? The truth is that while people dislike Arroyo, they are also deeply disillusioned with the political system, which has come to be known as the "EDSA State." Conversations with middle- and lower-class citizens inevitably produce the same answer to why they're not out demonstrating: "Well, whoever replaces her will probably be as bad, if not worse." Intrigued at the discovery that only a handful of students in my undergraduate class in political sociology at the University of the Philippines, the traditional hotbed of activism, had attended the rallies, I posed to them the question, Is this democracy worth saving? Two-thirds said no.

Rather than taking to the streets, people are fleeing in large numbers to Europe, the United States and the Middle East. Some 10 percent of the Filipino labor force now works overseas, and one out of every four Filipinos wants to emigrate. It is estimated that at least 30 percent of Filipino households now subsist on remittances sent by 8 million expatriates.

Cynicism about democracy here is understandable if one considers that it has served as a mechanism for frenzied competition for political office among elite factions while enabling them to maintain a united front against social and economic change. Some Filipinos point out bitterly that while authoritarian Vietnam reduced the proportion of its population living in extreme poverty from 51 percent in 1990 to 10 percent in 2003, the Philippines could only bring it down from 20 percent to 14 percent in the same period. They decry the fact that at 0.46, the Philippines' Gini coefficient, the most reliable measure of inequality, is the worst in Southeast Asia.

These statistics come alive with a tour of metro Manila's vast shantytowns, where conditions of urban squalor are unparalleled in the region. During a recent visit to the sprawling Tatalon slum in Quezon City, I heard a constant refrain from people I interviewed that all recent administrations were the same in one respect: They had done absolutely nothing for poor people, though a few conceded that "Erap [Estrada] has a heart."

Some analysts say that while "elite capture" of electoral processes contributed to the failure of the EDSA State, it has not been the only critical factor. It was also doomed from the start by external actors. In this view, one of the key reasons the United States, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund shifted their support in the mid-1980s from the discredited Marcos dictatorship was the regime's inability to impose policies needed to repay the $26 billion in external debt to financial institutions. The new democracy, which had a legitimacy the dictatorship lacked, became Washington's favored instrument for the imposition of a harsh "structural adjustment" program.

Debt repayment became the national economic priority of the fledgling government of Corazon Aquino, which legislated "automatic appropriation" of the full amount needed yearly for servicing the foreign debt. With up to 50 percent of the budget allocated to debt service in some years and the remainder eaten up by operational expenses and salaries, hardly anything was left over for capital expenditures, dooming the country to stagnation. Not surprisingly, by mid-2005 the foreign debt stood at more than $56 billion, with as much as 88 percent of government revenues going to service the total public debt. Committed to Aquino's "model debtor strategy," successive administrations dug a deeper and deeper fiscal hole. It is ironic that today Aquino marches against Arroyo, when she herself helped forge the policy that helped doom Arroyo. Thus, between elite capture of electoral processes and externally imposed economic policies, the EDSA State stood little chance of success.

The Philippine situation is not unique. Indeed, it illustrates

Walden Bello is professor of sociology at the University of the Philippines and executive director of the Bangkok-based research and analysis institute Focus on the Global South.

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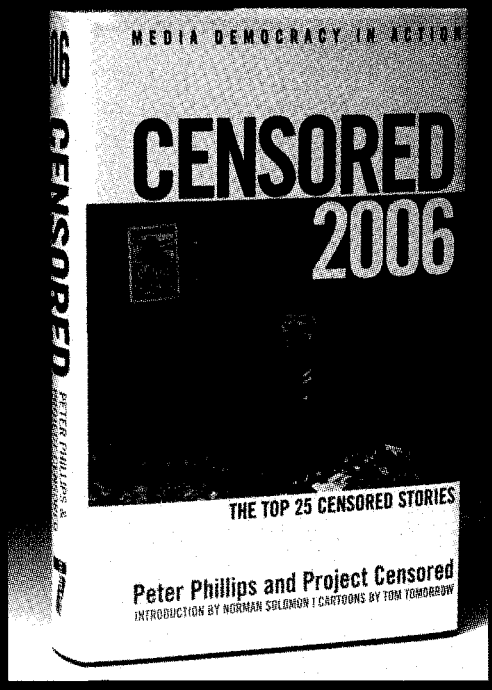
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4. Quietly signed Intelligence Authorization Act a threat to civil liberties.
5. Attack on the Freedom of Information Act keeps government behind closed doors.
6. The real oil-for-food scandal in Iraq reveals U.S. involvement.
7. Independent journalists killed in Iraq due to army negligence.
8. Iraqi occupation turns traditional farming system into corporate agribusiness.
9. Iran becomes the next target in the "War on Terror" when it plans to open an international oil exchange marker in euros.
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the trajectory of what Samuel Huntington christened the "third wave" of democratic expansion, beginning in the mid-1970s, when repressive regimes from Southeast Asia to Latin America were swept away. Great hopes at the end of the era of dictatorships had turned to bitter disappointment by the beginning of the millennium. A 2004 poll conducted by the United Nations Development Program showed that 55 percent of Latin Americans surveyed said they would support authoritarian regimes over democratic ones if the shift would solve their economic woes. A reversal of the third wave, say some analysts, has in fact already begun with the destruction of Pakistani democracy by Gen. Pervez Musharraf in 1999, an act that enjoyed substantial support among the middle and poorer classes alienated by corrupt and ineffective democratic governments under competitors Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif.

With the distant Marcos era now viewed through rose-tinted glasses by many in a younger generation of Filipinos who did not experience the depredations of dictatorial rule, there is a danger that, as in Pakistan, a return of authoritarianism lies in the country's future. Unlike in Pakistan, however, it may not be through the agency of the country's small and fragmented military, though scores of young officers are said to be seething with discontent. Indeed, many do not rule out a self-initiated "executive coup" à la Marcos on the part of President Arroyo—a move they see in a recent executive order greatly restricting street protests. A large cause of concern on the part of die-hard EDSA democrats is that the political forces that would bar such a return are in very bad shape. The "elite ins" and "elite outs" are locked in a bitter war of attrition, with the middle ground fast disappearing. The left is dominated by an aging, authoritarian Communist Party that has oscillated opportunistically between allying with one faction of the elite or another in classic 1930s "united front" fashion, with each swing, paradoxically, seeming to move it further from power. There are reports, though, that its armed wing, the New People's Army, is attracting fresh recruits in some areas as poverty and corruption make people more desperate.

Philippine civil society was once one of the most dynamic in the region, and there were hopes that it would act as the counterweight to the state in the new democratic dispensation. But successive waves of civil-society actors have joined elite-dominated governments that used their rhetoric of "people's empowerment" and "sustainable development" while co-opting them—indeed, in some cases turning them into hard-line apologists. Some of both Estrada's and Arroyo's leading partisans were once prominent human rights and social justice activists. "Civil society" is no longer the resonant term it once was, connoting partisanship for justice, equity and clean politics. Indeed, it is now cynically regarded by some as a stepping stone to political power.

So, as it enters its twentieth year, the EDSA State limps along, devoid of vision and inspiration, increasingly shorn of defenders, awaiting the *coup de grâce* that nature, which always abhors a vacuum, seems poised to inflict. The pessimism is palpable, yet there are those who will not fatalistically accept either democratic entropy or a return to authoritarianism. The hope, they say, lies in the fledgling pluralist "New Left," which is fighting to liberate democracy from its imprisonment in the EDSA system. Represented by such formations as the coalition Laban ng Masa, or "Struggle of the Masses," and the Citizens' Action Party, better known as Akbayan, this movement has called for the president to resign while keeping its distance from the current working alliance between elite politicians and the old left. It advocates the immediate establishment of a "transitional revolutionary government" and promotes a program of democratic renewal that links participatory governance with radical social reform. These new progressives are fresh and committed, but they concede that they are in a race against time. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)
dered about Wilsey's superhuman powers of recall."

The reason not a single reviewer remarked on my powers of recall is that the above passages (and numerous others like them) have nothing to do with my memory. They come from transcriptions of audio- and videotape. I'm not sure how Siegel missed this, as I go out of my way to explain, at several points in the book, that video crews are following us around and that tapes are rolling. It's explicit in both of the above situations.

I can stand being told I'm not funny, or that I don't know when I am funny (actually, this is strikingly similar to something my dad told me when I was growing up—and I find it funny). I am flattered to be singled out, at 3,000 words in the nation's "premier journal of opinion," as a representative of cultural decadence/decline. It is interesting to hear that I am unreflective (I will have to reflect on this). I can't help but be amused at being put forward as a rightful successor to the current President of the United States. What the hell, Siegel basically says that I'm an illiterate narcissist, and my book sucks—that's his opinion, and he's got a right to it! But it's infuriating (and insidious) to be attacked by a professional reviewer who has, in fact, just not read things very closely. I would be grateful if you would set the record straight. SEAN WILSEY

SIEGEL REPLIES

New York City

■ All through his memoir, beginning with his childhood, Sean Wilsey produces dozens of directly quoted conversations—some of them very intimate—quotation marks and all, that he claims took place between himself and various people. He presents these exchanges as verbatim recollections. On a handful of occasions, he specifies that he is quoting from a letter or a news account or from the transcript of a public event. Obviously, I did not use those passages as examples of what I skeptically called his "superhuman powers of recall." With regard to the two examples Wilsey cites in his letter, at no point does he say in his book that he has recordings, tapes or transcripts of those exchanges. Indeed, he introduces his account of listening to his parents' dinner party in this way: "As I went about my only-child activities...words found their way into my newly drained ears." Surely Wilsey does not mean to imply that "video crews" followed him around throughout his life, starting from the time he was a child. Even if this impossible Warholian dream/nightmare had actually happened, in that fantastical case Wilsey the memoirist would be listening to the tapes, not remembering the past.

I never said that Sean Wilsey's autobiography "sucked." In my review I said that Wilsey's "vulnerable, aching, unresolved memoir" was a private outpouring, not a literary expression, and that therefore any criticism of it would be taken by the author not as literary criticism but as a personal insult. It makes me sad that I was right. LEE SIEGEL

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

The American Political Tradition

ERIC FONER

THE RISE OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY: Jefferson to Lincoln.
By Sean Wilentz.
Norton. 1,044 pp. $35.

Undoubtedly the most celebrated and influential account of American life by a foreign observer is *Democracy in America*, written by Alexis de Tocqueville after his visit to the United States in the 1830s. As a French aristocrat, Tocqueville rather disliked democracy, but he understood that it had become central to Americans' understanding of themselves. Democracy, he recognized, was more than simply the right to vote; it was a habit of the heart, a deeply rooted set of beliefs that encouraged both individual initiative and an active public sphere populated by numerous voluntary organizations that sought to better society. Tocqueville was all too aware of American democracy's shortcomings (some of which sound uncannily up-to-date)—the venality and ignorance of public officials, the tendency toward conformism, the danger that demagogues could use democracy to climb to power. But he recognized America's experiment as the wave of the future. The same democratic upsurge, he wrote, was certain to sweep over Europe.

Ever since Tocqueville, historians have tried to explain the growth of American democracy. Did it spring from Anglo-Saxons' innate love of liberty? From the frontier? From the genius of the founders? How can one account for the limitations of a democracy that embraced white men, including immigrants from abroad, but excluded nonwhites and women?

Sean Wilentz is the latest to tackle these weighty questions. Wilentz, who teaches at Princeton, is best known for his first book, *Chants Democratic*, a study of workingmen's movements in Jacksonian New York City and probably the finest single volume to emerge from the American version of the "new labor history" of the 1970s and '80s. In *The Rise of American Democracy*, Wilentz traces the checkered history of American democracy from the Revolution to the Civil War. Drawing on extensive research and a deep immersion in modern scholarship—the footnotes alone provide a road map to the last quarter-century of historical writing—the book is a magisterial synthesis that deserves the attention of anyone interested in the American past.

Among its other virtues, *The Rise of American Democracy* reaffirms the vitality and relevance of political history. Once the centerpiece of the study of the American past, political history has been overshadowed of late by social and cultural analysis and efforts to write history "from below." Accused of elitism or simply deemed irrelevant as subjects like the family, consumer culture, and racial and ethnic relations rose to the fore, political historians have been reduced to pleading with their colleagues to bring politics back into discussions of the American past.

Wilentz's Rise of American Democracy *is a magisterial synthesis that reaffirms the vitality and relevance of political history.*

As Wilentz's subtitle suggests, national political leaders play a central role in his account. He refuses to submerge politics in social history or to see it as merely a reflection of social forces. Politics shaped American society and was, in turn, shaped by it. But unlike the hagiographies of Founding Fathers that regularly turn up on the bestseller lists, *The Rise of American Democracy* is political history that builds upon and incorporates the innovations in social history rather than repudiating or ignoring them. Statesmen and laborers, men and women, blacks and whites, deists and evangelicals—the cast of characters is as kaleidoscopic as American society itself. Jefferson and Lincoln are here, but so is the Indian leader Tecumseh, slave

Eric Foner is DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University. His most recent book, Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction *(Knopf), has just been published.*

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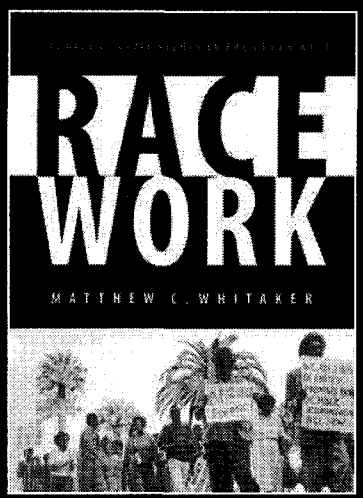

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rebels Gabriel and Denmark Vesey, pioneer feminists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and radical abolitionists David Walker and William Lloyd Garrison. All took part, often in unpredictable ways, in the rise of democracy.

Like Tocqueville, Wilentz recognizes in the rise of democracy a profound political transformation. The idea that "sovereignty rightly belongs to the mass of ordinary individual and equal citizens," he insists, represented a new departure in the Western tradition. As long ago as Aristotle, political philosophers had warned that democracy inevitably degenerated into anarchy and tyranny. For centuries, doctrines of divine right and hierarchical authority had dominated political thought. Democracy's triumph was hardly preordained. Rather than a gift from benevolent political leaders or the culmination of the immanent logic of the Revolution and Constitution, democracy was born in struggle, its advance contested, its achievements always fragile and sometimes reversible. Wilentz's view of democracy as the result of a long, complex historical process rooted in the lives and aspirations of ordinary citizens offers a welcome alternative to current claims that democracy is a timeless (and easily exportable) feature of American "civilization."

All of the subjects treated in Wilentz's book—from the American Revolution to the battle between Jeffersonians and Hamiltonians, the triumph of Andrew Jackson and the coming of the Civil War—have been examined by previous historians, and much of his story will be familiar to specialists. But no one has integrated these elements into a seamless narrative that places democracy and the contest over it at the center. Wilentz begins with the Revolution, not because most prominent patriots were democrats (most were not) but because the struggle for independence emboldened ordinary men and women to demand a greater voice in public affairs. In colonial America, Wilentz writes, the "people" had existed only on election day; most Americans did not enjoy a continuous presence in public life. But the struggle for independence threw into question various forms of authority and inequality. Wilentz traces the rise of two overlapping but distinct groups pressing for greater popular participation in public affairs—rural democrats, attuned to local self-government and fearful of centralized political power, and city artisans, who demanded a say in urban affairs but proved willing to support a powerful national government such as that created by the federal Constitution.

Because of pressure from below, new state Constitutions adopted during the Revolution reduced the amount of property required to vote. But according to Wilentz, the groundwork for a democratic political system was not truly laid until the 1790s. With its lifetime judges, a Senate elected by state legislatures and a cumbersome indirect method of choosing the President, the national Constitution hardly established a functioning democracy. But conflicts in Congress over Alexander Hamilton's economic program—which linked the Republic's future to the self-interest of propertied merchants and bankers—quickly spread to the populace at large, a development unintended by the Founders. More and more citizens attended political meetings and became avid readers of newspapers and pamphlets.

Critics of George Washington's Administration established Democratic-Republican societies, which insisted on the right of the people to debate public issues and organize to affect public policy. Washington, who saw the government, not private associations, as the authentic voice of the people, condemned the societies as "self-created." But Wilentz insists this was precisely what made them democratic—unlike most previous political groups, they were not formed by political leaders, yet they claimed the right to scrutinize and criticize the conduct of elected officials. The Sedition Act of 1798, which made virtually any criticism of the government illegal, shows that many Federalists could not accept this democratic principle. By beating back Federalism and opening office to "self-made plebeians," Wilentz argues, Jefferson's election as President in 1800 marked a major advance for democracy. But national politics still operated "from the top down," with members of Congress initiating policy and choosing Republican and Federalist presidential candidates.

The War of 1812, Wilentz shows, gave further impetus to the rise of democracy. By fighting Great Britain, the world's greatest power, to a draw, the United States undermined lingering assumptions about the natural superiority of the well-born. By breaking the remaining power of Indians east of the Mississippi River, the war opened new lands to settlement by the "country democracy." In a "cruel irony," the pan-Indian resistance to white encroachment, organized by Tecumseh, had helped persuade Americans to go to war with his ally Great Britain in the first place. The road to white democracy was paved with the shattered dreams of Native Americans.

Between 1816 and 1820, four new West-

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ern states (Indiana, Illinois, Alabama and Mississippi) entered the Union. All established very liberal voting requirements as a way of attracting settlers. In the East, even as the expansion of industry and commercial agriculture increased the number of wage earners who could not meet property qualifications, poorer citizens insisted that they were as fit as anyone else to exercise the right to vote. By the 1820s, nearly all the states had divorced voting from property ownership. But as Wilentz shows, the progress of democracy did not come without fierce resistance by adherents of the older view that men without property lacked a political will of their own and should not have a say in government.

By the 1830s, when Tocqueville visited America, the principle that "the people" ruled had become an axiom of American politics. Those who opposed this idea, Tocqueville wrote, "hide their heads." The central portion of Wilentz's book discusses the flourishing system known as Jacksonian democracy, a boisterous, highly partisan political order that engaged the energies of massive numbers of Americans (by 1840 something like 80 percent of eligible voters turned out on election day). Unlike many previous historians, Wilentz insists that substantive differences separated Jacksonian Democrats from their Whig opponents. The Whigs, led by Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams, retained an elitist view of politics and, not trusting individual initiative, looked to the national government to promote and regulate economic development through centrally planned canal and railroad construction, a protective tariff and a national bank regulating the currency. Jacksonians favored a "more secure and egalitarian commercialism," which they believed would give ordinary citizens greater opportunity to share in the fruits of economic growth.

Wilentz is clearly more sympathetic to Jackson than to his opponents, but he identifies a rising generation he calls the New Whigs—men like Abraham Lincoln—who wedded their party's commitment to economic development with a sincere embrace of democracy and a broad humanitarianism. They were more willing than most Jacksonians to speak out about the plight of Southern slaves and of Indians removed from their remaining lands during Jackson's presidency. Eventually, through the Republican Party, these men would come to power.

Wilentz's treatment of the Jackson era bears comparison with a classic of American historical scholarship, Arthur

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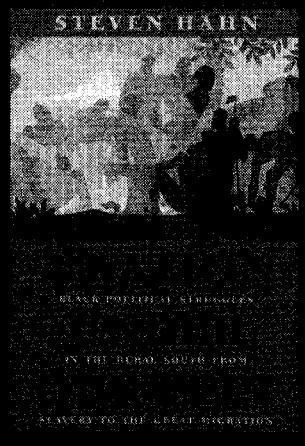

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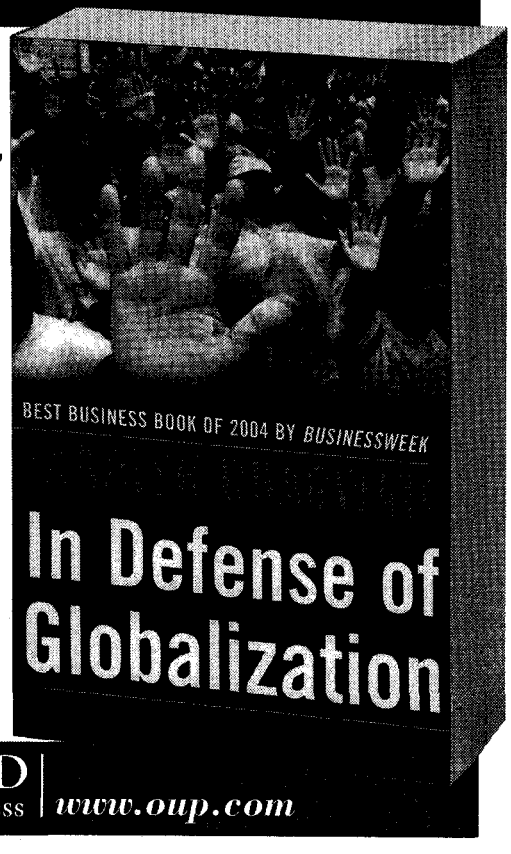

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Schlesinger Jr.'s *Age of Jackson,* published six decades ago. Like Schlesinger, Wilentz takes Jacksonians' commitment to democracy seriously and, like him, finds the roots of democratic radicalism in popular struggles, especially on economic matters, led by the "city democracy," not by Western frontiersmen. But Wilentz's account also shows how the writing of history has changed since 1945. Schlesinger ignored Indian removal, a central event of the 1830s. Despite his overall sympathy for the Jacksonians, Wilentz offers a powerful indictment of the policies that produced the Trail of Tears. Even more striking, Wilentz places the issue of slavery at the center of his account. The rise of American democracy, he shows, went hand in hand with the expansion of slavery and the consolidation in the South of the most powerful slave society the modern world has seen. The conflict between the slave South and free-labor North over the meaning of American democracy eventually led to civil war.

Some reviewers criticized Wilentz's first book for ignoring both the presence of blacks among New York City's working class and the racism of white workers' political parties and trade unions. *The Rise of American Democracy*, in contrast, foregrounds the role of the abolitionist movement and makes African-Americans major actors in the rise of democracy. The birth of radical abolitionism, exemplified by the black pamphleteer David Walker and the white newspaper editor William Lloyd Garrison, formed part of the democratic agitation of the Jacksonian era.

Abolitionist societies were among the numerous voluntary associations whose proliferation so impressed Tocqueville. But because they attacked not only slavery but also the racial boundaries that excluded free African-Americans from a share in democracy, abolitionists represented "a new kind of American political community." Both major parties tried to exclude the slavery question from public debate. Neither could conceive of a biracial democratic order. Abolitionists castigated slavery as an aristocratic institution that threatened the future of democracy for whites and blacks alike. When the nation's territorial expansion thrust the slavery question into the heart of the political system, a new generation of Northern political leaders, Abraham Lincoln foremost among them, picked up the theme that genuine democracy could exist only in a free-labor society. Lincoln's election as President in 1860 plunged American democracy into its greatest crisis. And the Union's triumph—achieved in part by the service of 200,000 black men in the Union Army and Navy—led Republicans to purge the laws and Constitution of the racial exclusion that had from the beginning disfigured American democracy.

Wilentz tells this story in a long, detailed narrative—too long and detailed, no doubt, for the taste of some readers. But he is a vivid writer and the story never flags. Some will surely question individual judgments. Wilentz is, in my view, rather harsh on John Quincy Adams, whom he characterizes as a "cosmopolitan liberal aristocrat" unable to adjust to the "democratic ferment of the 1820s." Perhaps so, but Adams's vision of a federal government that assumed the responsibility to promote the arts and sciences stands in sharp contrast to the anti-intellectualism so rife among the Jacksonians (not to mention today's political leadership). Wilentz perhaps too readily gives the Jacksonians the benefit of the doubt on slavery and race, attributing their refusal to countenance suffrage for the North's free blacks to the belief that political equality is meaningless without social equality. But overall, the book will surely become the standard account of the development of American political culture in its formative years.

The Rise of American Democracy ends at the outset of Reconstruction, with the impaneling of an interracial jury to hear the case against Jefferson Davis, the erstwhile Confederate President. Davis never did go to trial, but the jury's composition seemed to symbolize the advent of a democracy based on truly universal participation. Of course, the story does not end here. Women—half the population—were still excluded from the vote. The late nineteenth century witnessed a marked retreat from democracy, with blacks and some poorer whites losing the right to vote in the South, and new registration and residency requirements reducing voting by immigrants and others in the rest of the country. Not until the 1920s did most women gain the right to vote; not until the 1960s did Southern blacks regain the right to participate in American democracy.

In the era Wilentz describes, far more Americans than today remained outside democracy's boundaries. Yet in some ways, that democratic system was more robust than our own. Voter participation was far greater, popular involvement with political parties and leaders far more intense. Questions then thought to be subject to democratic control—currency and banking policy, public regulation of the economy, how to combat economic inequality—are now off the agenda. Today, only half the eligible population bothers to vote, no one is sure if his or her ballot will be accurately counted and the people's representatives are widely held in disrepute. As in the nineteenth century, we still grapple with the question of what kind of democracy America is and ought to be. ■

Frontier Injustice

ANATOL LIEVEN

ANDREW JACKSON: His Life and Times. By H.W. Brands. Doubleday. 620 pp. $35.

Think of Andrew Jackson as your grandfather who spent his life in the military (old style). Many of his attitudes are absolutely abominable, especially when it comes to race. He believes passionately in democracy and freedom, but his views of who is entitled to those blessings appear to leave out the vast majority of humanity. His wartime anecdotes and views about war and other nations make you shudder. Whenever he fiercely disagrees with a person or a country, he threatens to shoot them down like a dog, and since he spent much of his life shooting people and is a leading member of the NRA this doesn't seem an empty threat. All your educated acquaintances sneer at him. He can't spell. He talks as if he comes from the backwoods of the Carolinas, which happens to be the truth. You don't even share his taste in music.

And yet while you detest his service in Vietnam, you are very grateful that he fought against the Germans and the Japanese. You remember his flashes of great kindness and generosity. He is pathologi-

Anatol Lieven is a senior research fellow at the New America Foundation in Washington, DC, and author of America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism, *published in paperback this fall by Oxford University Press.*

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Astonishing Discovery of Mysterious "Gold Rush" Coin Stuns Experts

World's Rarest U.S. $20 Gold Proof Found: The San Francisco Mint 1854 Double Eagle Proof!

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A one-of-a-kind U.S. Treasury gold Proof coin has been accidentally discovered within the vaults of the official U.S. Government archives. This 1854-S gold Double Eagle $20 coin was struck by the San Francisco Mint in its first year of operation. The San Francisco Mint was born out of the need for a Western Frontier Mint when, in January of 1848, gold flakes were discovered at Sutter's Mill triggering one of the most important chapters in U.S. History—The California Gold Rush! To the surprise of historians, this single "S" mint Proof coin was individually struck from specially polished minting dies. How this unique Proof Double Eagle made its way across the continent and then into the hands of the federal archives is an unsolved mystery to this day.

Today, The First Federal Mint, announces the public release of the first-ever gold Proof commemorative honoring this rarest U.S. Government $20 gold piece. This 10mil gold Proof has a frosted image against a deep mirror field, creating a breathtaking work of art in gold. This 150th anniversary Mint release honors the legacy of a true historic masterpiece.

The magnificent 10mil gold Proof measures a full 39 mm diameter to truly showcase the beauty and intricacy of this legendary coin design. The issue price is set at $50.00. However, it is now available for a limited time at the introductory price of just $19.95.

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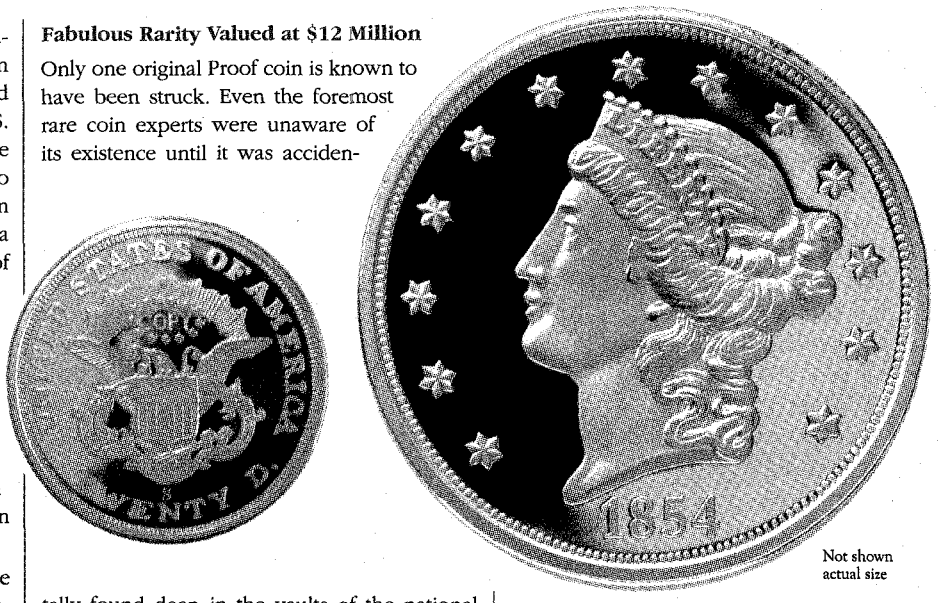
Only one original Proof coin is known to have been struck. Even the foremost rare coin experts were unaware of its existence until it was accidentally found deep in the vaults of the national museum. America's foremost authority on U.S. gold coins, David Akers, has written, "the 1854-S Double Eagle is easily the most significant and desirable branch mint Proof coin in existence." With the recent auction sale of one of the three 1933 Saint-Gaudens Double Eagles for $7.9 million, senior numismatist Nicholas Bruyer estimates the unique 1854-S Proof Double Eagle would bring at least $12 million if it ever becomes available at auction.



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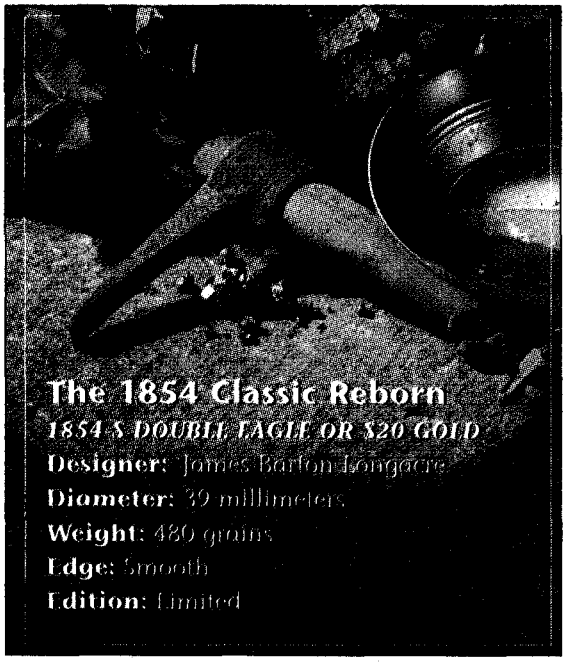

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cally loyal to his friends. Though he became a famous man, he retained a touching affection for and loyalty to your grandmother, despite her homeliness and country ways, including smoking a pipe at official dinners. Even at your most pacific, you feel a sneaking admiration for a man who has lead poisoning from the fragments of three separate bullets wandering round his body and yet works harder than most people a third of his age. He is, as they say, as tough as hickory. He carved his way upward—almost literally—from an impoverished, orphaned and desperate youth. He committed his murders face to face, not by giving orders to others from the safety of a Washington desk. Above all, as you grow older and wiser, you understand more that he is part of you, flesh of your flesh. If he hadn't existed, neither would you in any form be recognizable to yourself. You may hate him, but you can't cut him out of you.

Jackson and his followers championed democracy and freedom for 'the people,' except if you happened to be black, Indian or female.

Nobody today can claim Jackson as a grandfather, but some readers of *The Nation* may perhaps have Southern Scots-Irish grandfathers with the above traits (full disclosure: I'm mostly German-Irish, and my grandmother was Scottish, though her family was in the British service).

Jackson was not only an immense personality and historical force. He was also one of the supreme historical representatives of the Scots-Irish frontier and military tradition in America, with its cult of "toughness, maleness and whiteness," in the words of Michael Kazin. In this tradition the admirable and the detestable are inextricably mixed, and without it America would not be what it is today, geographically or culturally.

Andrew Jackson was born in the South Carolina Piedmont in 1767, to Protestant Scots-Irish parents who had emigrated from Ulster two years earlier. The family suffered terribly at British hands during the War of Independence, and hatred and distrust of Britain became a leitmotif of Jackson's life. Orphaned, and a wild youth even by Scots-Irish standards, Jackson moved to Tennessee and rose in local politics thanks in large part to his leadership of militia forces against the Indians. The duels that he fought with rival local figures mostly only enhanced his reputation among his constituency. He became a national hero with his crushing defeat of the British attempt to capture New Orleans in 1815. He also gained enormous popularity for his readiness to defy international law by pursuing Indian enemies into the Spanish territory of Florida and executing two of their British suppliers.

Jackson's victory over President John Quincy Adams in 1828 is usually taken as representing the triumph of mass democracy over the elites who had dominated American politics since independence. Jackson's championing of the common man against the East Coast elites has led to his popularity among liberal scholars like Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who might have been expected to distrust him.

However, this populist, nationalist anti-elitism has returned to bite the liberals with a vengeance in our own time. As for Jackson's economic egalitarianism, it should be noted that this was a specifically Western sense of equality of opportunity—including the free opportunity to seize lands from the Indians. It implied a defense of the common man against unfair suppression by the elites, but it certainly did not imply any kind of guaranteed economic status or state support for the population.

Jackson's victory, and the nature of his support, led to widespread fears that the United States was following France and Mexico into mob rule and military dictatorship. In fact, while Jackson pursued certain anti-elitist policies, most notably in his successful campaign against the Bank of the United States, he generally defended the Constitution. Jackson's facing down of the threat of South Carolina secession preserved the Union for another generation. Jackson was President until 1837; he died in 1845, after living long enough to see his protégé, Sam Houston, achieve one of his greatest ambitions, the incorporation of Texas into the Union and consequent removal of any potential foreign threat to the United States from the Southwest.

Jackson is of perennial interest as a historical figure, but far more important in today's historical climate is that we reckon with the impact of the ideology that bears his name, Jacksonianism, confronting in particular the combination of fanatical belief and extreme narrowness with which its exponents understood the concepts of democracy and freedom. We need to do this because Jacksonian ideas, however transformed over time, continue to shape how a great many Americans see their country and the world. A candid reckoning with Jacksonianism's history raises key questions about the ambiguous nature of democracy itself, and the relationship between democracy and nationalism. It also raises in acute form the point Eric Foner has made so brilliantly about the shifting definition of liberty in American history.

H.W. Brands's biography of Jackson fails completely in its approach to these questions. As an account of Jackson's upbringing, character and life, it is solid and well written. It does not add much of real importance to the 1984 biography by Robert V. Remini (now abridged into one volume), whose judgments it generally echoes. Brands's work also suffers from Remini's greatest failing, an identification with its subject sometimes tending toward hagiography, as in the statement that "Jackson's support indeed was the people" (despite his getting a minority of the popular vote). Still, Jackson's life and character were so amazing that it is always worth reading a new book about him on a plane or in bed—if you don't suffer from airsickness, nightmares or any lingering affection for Britain.

But Brands does not really deal with the deeper issues of Jacksonianism. It is striking that his bibliography contains no mention either of Michael Kazin's critical work *The Populist Persuasion*, which accords Jacksonianism a leading place, or of Walter Russell Mead's *Special Providence*, which contains an exceptionally intelligent analysis of the Jacksonian tradition. Nor is there a place for Richard Slotkin's great if problematic trilogy on the role of the frontier and its myths in American culture. As a study of how Jackson's ideas have affected later generations of Americans, Brands's book does not match Andrew Burstein's work of 2003, *The Passions of Andrew Jackson*.

Indeed, nowhere does Brands seriously analyze the word "democracy." In his version, whatever sins marred Jacksonian democracy, they were a product of his time and have since been redeemed by the forward march of democracy that Jackson helped to further, even to father. Jacksonianism's contribution to democracy is therefore seen as unimpeachably good: "Jackson's devotion to democracy was unsurprising in one born of the people and bred in the school of hard experience.... the Clan of Old Hickory, the tribe of

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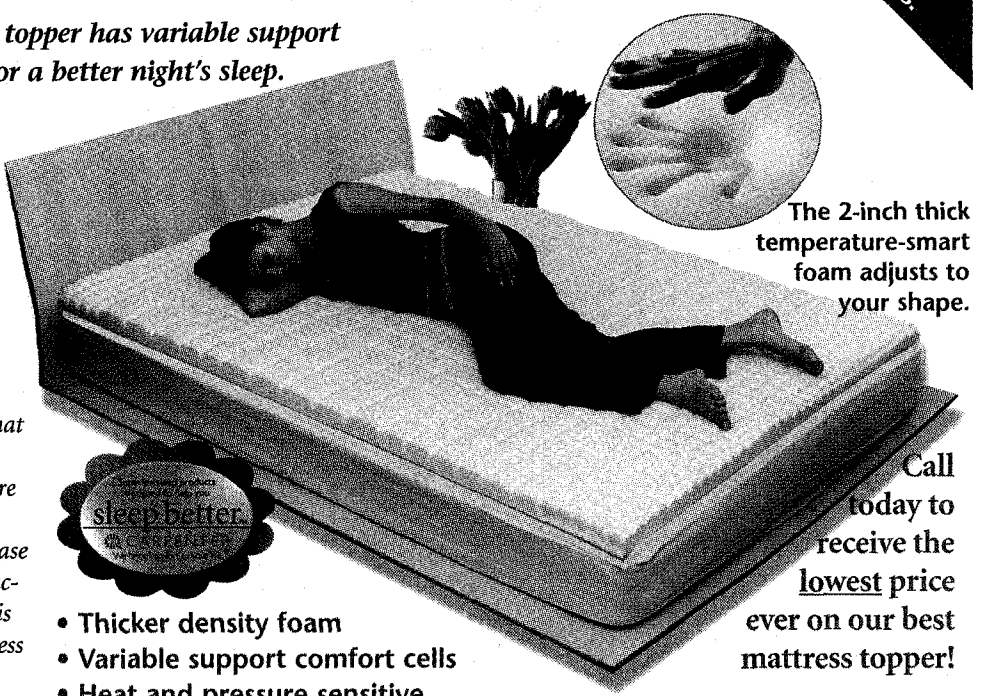

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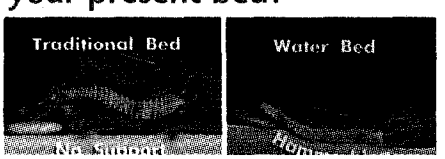

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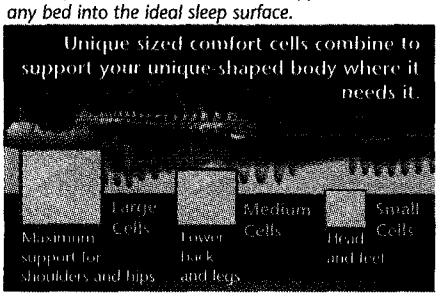
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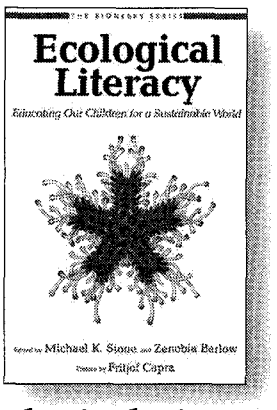

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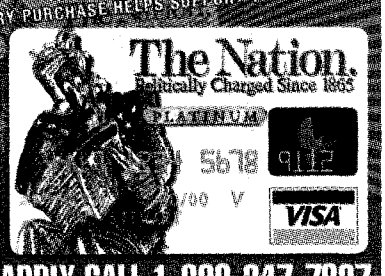

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Sharp Knife, was the American people." The book ends with the statement that "Andrew Jackson...devoted his life to making democracy possible."

On this point, unfortunately, Brands's book also reflects the dominant currents in the popular history of this country, as well as the way many Americans view the past, especially their own. To the extent that this sentimental, populist ethos reflects the democratic values of American civic nationalism, it is in principle positive. The problem is that it also encourages an instinctive, uncritical deference to words like "freedom" and "democracy" that can easily lead not only to great political naïveté but also ruthless political exploitation to suppress debate and dissent—as at present by the Bush Administration.

The most bitter and enduring issues that Jackson's memory raises about democracy and the American tradition concern the Cherokee question: Jackson's refusal as President to implement the decision of the Supreme Court under John Marshall in 1831 giving protection to the Cherokee against new measures passed by the State of Georgia making them subject to its law. This, as Jackson was well aware, laid the basis for the Indians' expulsion beyond the Mississippi to make way for white settlers. "John Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it," he is reported to have said. Whether he uttered them or not, these words faithfully reflected the spirit in which he acted. The US government refused to defend the Cherokee against Georgia, Jackson warned them that they had no choice but to leave and within a few years (though after Jackson himself had left office) they were driven from their ancestral homeland to Oklahoma on the "Trail of Tears," on which a large number died of disease and malnutrition.

Brands tackles this issue head on—in marked contrast to Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who in *The Age of Jackson* (1945) amazingly evaded the issue altogether, even in a chapter titled "Jacksonian Democracy and the Law." Brands takes the line of Remini and other recent defenders of Jackson in arguing—as indeed Jackson did—that the "attitudes" of Southern white society made it impossible for the Cherokee to remain. As Brands writes:

> The Indians must either adopt the ways of the Whites, including the laws of the states in which they lived, or move. To stay where they were, under their old customs, was not an option. Jackson knew the Indians' neighbors [i.e., Southern whites] having lived among such people for most of his life. They wouldn't leave the Indians alone, nor let them keep large tracts of land lightly occupied. The status quo was untenable; for the Indians it risked "utter annihilation."

Realistically, therefore, their only choice was deportation or extermination. Indeed, it was only their removal west of the Mississippi that allowed even a remnant of the Cherokee to survive as a people, rather than following the other eastern tribes into oblivion.

There is a good deal of truth to this argument, but what Brands and others fail to realize is that it is less a defense of Jackson than an indictment of his society. The reason the case of the Cherokee has caused such disquiet throughout the generations is that they were not "wild Indians" like the Comanche or the Kiowa. Given the nomadic and raiding life of the latter, including truly bestial treatment of prisoners, it is hard to imagine how they could have coexisted in peace not only with white Americans but with any settled society. The Cherokee, by contrast, were a settled people who became literate and Christian, and who tried to play by American rules—including the appeal to the Supreme Court. They had also been America's, and Jackson's, allies against other tribes and against the British. Most of the empires of the time, including the French and Spanish, would have protected them as trusted allies.

It is instructive in this regard to contrast their treatment with that of the Maori of New Zealand by the British Crown at around the same time. The British conquered the Maori and seized much of their land. But when they made a treaty with the Maori, they stuck to it. They protected the Maori from the white settlers in New Zealand and guaranteed their possession of enough land to live on—with the result that today, the Maori are a powerful, growing (and perhaps in the future, dominant) section of New Zealand society.

In the case of the US frontier, the alternatives always seemed to be either assimilation, deportation or extermination. Coexistence with indigenous groups has always been especially difficult for the United States, at least as long as those groups retained any autonomous power. The drive either to Americanize or destroy such communities is the flip side of the often admirable American desire to spread democracy and freedom. Or in Andrew Burstein's words, Jackson

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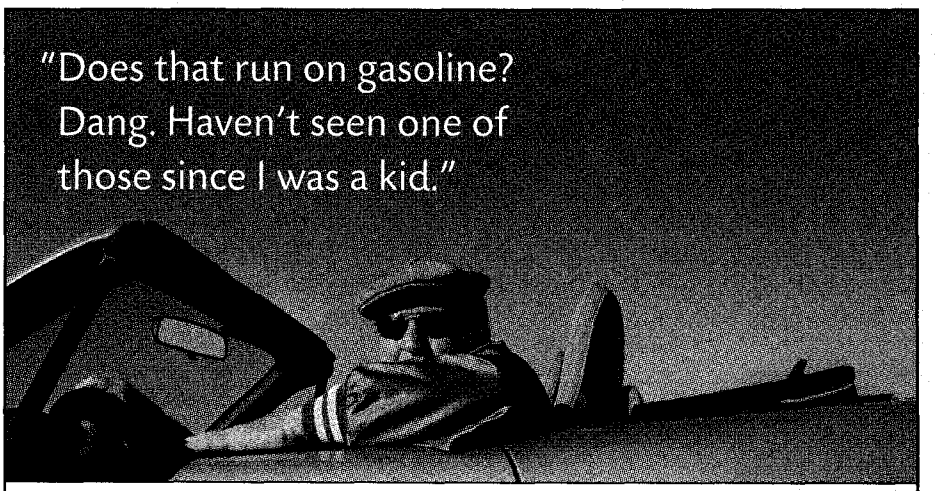
"expected Indians to be either diabolical or pliant."

The fate of the Southern Indians, however, also illustrates some wider and uncomfortable truths about democracy and "freedom," which Americans would do well to consider before they plunge into any more attempts to democratize countries in the Muslim world. The first is that through most of history and in most societies, from ancient Athens on, ideas of "freedom" have been closely allied to ideas of personal or group "privilege"—just as the whites of the South and of the frontier interpreted their freedom vis-à-vis the Indians and the blacks.

Another point is that people have always been willing to make trade-offs between democracy and the rule of law on the one side and security on the other. In the case of the Cherokee, Jackson and his followers were willing to ignore US law not only because they were greedy for land but also because of the horrible frontier experiences of the previous century, including in many cases personal experience of Indian raids. They saw the Cherokee as a real threat and potential fifth column, if backed by a European power like Britain or France.

The long determination to maintain ruthless suppression of the blacks, by slavery or terror, also owed much to fear—paranoid and hysterical no doubt, but nonetheless real for that. And it is sad but true that while the diminution of this fear in the white South in the twentieth century owed something to the spread of new ideas, it also owed something to the fact that, thanks to massive migration to the Northern cities—driven in part by white Southern terrorism—blacks formed a much smaller proportion of the Southern population in the 1960s than they had in the 1860s.

Above all, Americans should remember that for by far the greater part of American history, if Americans had been told by an outside dominant power that "democracy" meant acknowledging black equality and respecting Indian land, a majority would have unhesitatingly rejected democracy and opted instead for some kind of populist, racially based authoritarianism—something so unthinkable to Brands that he does not even consider it. During Jackson's presidency his enemies, John Quincy Adams among them, accused him of seeking to set up a "military monarchy" along Latin American lines, governing dictatorially though



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with occasional plebiscitary support from the masses.

This didn't happen, of course, and so the United States today is not Mexico or Brazil. The Yankee, or New England, element in the American tradition, with its historical commitment to the rule of law and to civil society, is not the only reason the Latin American solution did not come to pass. Jackson and his descendants have always been genuinely attached to democracy and the law, though in their own specific understanding of these terms. For most of American history, tendencies toward authoritarianism have taken a communal form, and as with Jackson they have been phrased and even thought of in terms of a defense of the American democratic system, not a revolt against it. However, this adherence to democracy has also involved a conviction that being American means adhering to a national cultural community, one defined by its values, and in the past by race, ethnicity and religion.

Like Jackson, the numerous descendants of this tradition have had a strong sense that this community is threatened by alien and savage "others." They have also had a sense that they constitute in some way the authentic American people, or folk; the backbone of the nation, possessing a form of what German nationalists called the *gesunder Volkssinn* ("healthy sense of belonging to the people"), embracing correct national forms of religion, social behavior and patriotism. With time, they have come to accept people first of different ethnicities, then of different races, as members of the American community—but only so long as they conform to American norms and become "part of the team."

The freedom of aliens and deviants, who do not share the folk culture, can therefore legitimately be circumscribed by authoritarian and even savage means, as long as this is to defend the community and reflects the will of the sound members of the community. In the words of Walter Russell Mead, which have deep implications for American nationalism abroad as well as at home: "Jacksonian realism is based on the very sharp distinction in popular feeling between the inside of the folk community and the dark world without."

This is the tradition that produced figures like John Ashcroft. Like Jackson's, Ashcroft's adherence to the rule of law is not hypocritical. It is merely qualified by two very large conditions: that in a crisis, written laws can be suspended for the sake of the defense of the community; and that the law in any case applies only to a limited extent to aliens, particularly those who are suspected of being enemies and of having behaved in a "barbaric" manner.

Tragically, the indiscriminate savagery of the attacks on 9/11 was all but destined to reawaken this aspect of the Jacksonian tradition in the United States. Systematically fanned by the Bush Administration, the atrocities have produced a widespread attitude toward the outside world in general and the Muslim world in particular that closely replicates that of Jackson toward the "savage" Indians and their international backers. Leaving aside issues of morality and justice, however, there are some critical differences between the two cases. Say what you like about Jackson and his Scots-Irish frontiersmen, they were superbly effective fighters. They knew their enemies. They knew the land. The contrast with their hapless descendants blundering around Iraq could hardly be more stark. Jackson would doubtless have approved of the spirit behind the Bush Administration's "war on terror." I doubt very much that he would have approved of its execution. ■

Another Country

VINCE PASSARO

THE MARCH. By E.L. Doctorow. Random House. 384 pp. $25.95.

E.L. Doctorow was born in 1931, John Updike in 1932 and Philip Roth in 1933. Joan Didion was born only a year later, in 1934, and Don DeLillo in 1936. While only five years separate the eldest from the youngest of these writers, one senses a distinct generational split between them. Doctorow's new novel, *The March*, for example, is an intricate and melancholy re-creation of the final months of the Civil War, following Sherman's Army from Atlanta to Savannah and up through the Carolinas until the war's end. An imaginative attempt to grapple with the history of our country, its callused nobility and tendency to find redemption in blowing things up, this is the kind of historical project Roth or Updike might have undertaken (as, in a sense, they have in *The Plot Against America* and *Memories of the Ford Administration*), but never Didion or DeLillo, nor any of the politically inclined American writers born later. What lies beneath Doctorow's historical novels (*Ragtime*, *Billy Bathgate*, *World's Fair* and now *The March*) is a romantic love of his country, its history of democracy and violence, and its layered identity of individualism, religiosity, struggle and plenty.

Doctorow's complex brand of patriotism does not prevent him from exploring the abuses of power that mark our history. He did so from his earliest work, as in *The Book of Daniel* and later in *Ragtime*, and he does so again here. Yet his sadness and outrage are different from the cold contempt of DeLillo. Encountering Doctorow's sadness at the scars of our past, younger writers might ask, *What did you expect?*

Something much better, might be the reply. In their fictional re-creations, Doctorow, Roth and Updike seek to understand and re-experience America, to re-examine the possibilities of what was, in their childhoods, still a young and second-tier nation; they are able to lose themselves in the color and flavor of a past that is certainly not innocent but lacks the corrosive cynicism and corruption we would be forced to recognize in ourselves later. These writers are fed, perhaps, by their knowledge of an America their younger peers never saw, their experience of a brief period when Americanism and justice were not the antithetical concepts they later became; when progressivism had a foothold; when the labor movement became an established and significant force; when the United States achieved a kind of honorable strength in World War II. I suspect these realities allowed certain writers, like Roth and Doctorow, to internalize an enduring view of their country that younger writers simply do not have. The actual experience of America as a nation in which justice is possible was, for people born later, profoundly undermined. The point of view of later writers is more caustic, and

Vince Passaro's novel Violence, Nudity, Adult Content *(Simon & Schuster) was recently published in paperback. His criticism has appeared in* Harper's *and many other magazines.*

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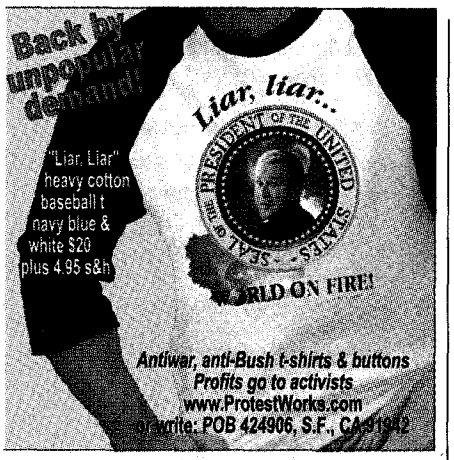
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so is their language: more skeptical, less elegant, more ironic, less lavish, more queasy, less fundamentally hopeful. Walker Percy, though born earlier, is one of them: He began writing late in life and as a landed Southerner was untouched by the Northern working-class experience that Doctorow, Roth and Updike share. Cormac McCarthy, interestingly enough, was born in 1933 and has a little of both worlds in his work. You might say that everything he wrote through *Blood Meridian* (1985) allies him to the younger, darker camp; the Border Trilogy, which followed, places him with the older and more sentimental one. We would be wise to remember that while the earlier books earned him a great reputation among other writers, the later ones have made him a fortune. *Blood Meridian* comes to mind in a few passages in *The March*, long adjectival sentences describing blood and viscera and shock and death, but the similarity is likely accidental. Of course, everybody gets a little Faulknerian when the blood starts to flow on Southern ground.

It is probably artificial and false to argue that this fundamental difference in outlook is generational; it might simply be a reflection of two inclinations in the genetics of American prose, dating back to the time of Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Twain and James and evolving down through Hemingway, Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor, until the American novel can be classified as a set of subspecies all mixing nostalgia and horror in various degrees. Yet having recently read Roth's *The Plot Against America* and having re-read his *American Pastoral* and *The Human Stain*, and now reading *The March*, I couldn't escape the sense that the patriotism of Roth and Doctorow, the elegiac embrace they give to the whole vivid ball of the American past, is fascinating and alien: It utterly lacks the ambivalence, paralysis and psychosis of postmodern fiction.

Let it be said, after these ruminations, that *The March* is a very fine, robust and deeply intelligent novel. The only novels of the Civil War that rank with it, to my knowledge, are Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*, which is set in the years after the war but is suffused with its violent implications and its wandering, marauding ex-soldiers. Doctorow's plot finds its structure in a matrix of geography and time: From the late summer of 1864 to the spring of 1865, Sherman's armies gathered in Chattanooga, made their way to northeast Georgia, attacked Atlanta and then commenced the famous "march to the sea" in Savannah, destroying almost all that they touched along the way. From Shelby Foote's monumental history of the war we know that Grant's orders to Sherman were blunt: "Get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their war resources."

Sherman interpreted "resources" as broadly as possible, and his armies burned down whole towns, emptied every storehouse and killed plenty of civilians along the way. *The March* follows them from just after Atlanta to the end of the war, moving among a collection of representative characters: Sherman himself, who is small and moody and strange; a number of his senior officers; an Army surgeon named Wrede Sartorius, who is the most complex and interesting of the book's many complex and interesting characters; several regular soldiers on both sides, including a mad Southern boy who masquerades first as a Union soldier and then as a Northern photographer, using the camera he's hijacked from its real owner as a bluff in order to get close to Sherman and attempt to shoot him; and a host of women and blacks who end up displaced and following the Army. Doctorow's depictions are meticulous and lush. This is a large novel, in human scope as well as in physical size.

Doctorow is particularly fascinated by the shifting psychologies of men at war, the powerful combinations of spirituality and atavism it engenders in its participants. You see this especially in the passages momentarily focusing on particular soldiers in the battle scenes; you see it too when the novel moves to the fighting's aftermath, in the sections dealing with Sartorius, the women and few men who assist him and the blank-eyed near-dead to whom they attend. Sartorius is a strange and compelling figure in the novel: a European-born surgeon, rather cold, intellectually far ahead of his fellow doctors at the time. He thinks, while others, even the generals, intuit and feel, in typically American fashion. It has long been known that many of the treatments applied to wounded men in the Civil War did more to kill than to heal them, and Sartorius is Doctorow's Enlightenment Man, fighting these barbarous practices with new science, largely, it seems, of his own devising. There is a brief love story between him and the daughter of one of the Southern gentry who has died and left her basically itinerant. But the book refuses to sustain such a romance, as surely the war refused to

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do. Such moments come in war with great intensity and fade away like yesterday's battle. That Sartorius is German-born, and his name so evocative of Carlyle's paean to German Romanticism, *Sartor Resartus*, must have some meaning for Doctorow: His Sartorius is peculiar and scientific in the way of Teufelsdröckh, Carlyle's mad "philosopher of clothes," and perhaps too Doctorow sees Sartorius's eventual redemption in Carlyle's prescriptive combination of suffering, love and affirmation; but since his love affair hardly overwhelms him and he seems immune to suffering, the idea is not highly developed. If there is a main character in *The March*, Sartorius is it. He appeared in *The Waterworks*, an earlier Doctorow book set after the war, yet I still finished *The March* with a curious longing to know what became of him and his ideas, where he went and what he went on to do, which I did not feel for any of the other characters, certainly not Sherman or Grant, much less—entertaining though they often are—the noble, struggling regular folks, two of whom, the biracial Pearl and the white soldier with whom she has fallen in love, Doctorow honors with a highly sentimental closing.

The March's second unifying concern is with the political implications for blacks and whites in the months when the South's defeat became a certainty and emancipation was a vivid if not entirely comprehensible fact. As Sherman's army marched through Georgia and the Carolinas, ravaging farmhouses, burning down plantations and leveling its major cities, it was eventually trailed by some 25,000 or more freed blacks, who, having nothing left behind them, simply followed along like Israelites meandering behind a hell of a lot of gunpowder toward the promised land. It's a promised land that, alas, we know to have been a mirage. Doctorow captures distinct and intriguing personalities among his black characters, but his depiction of black vernacular of the nineteenth-century South can make you squirm a little. It is a difficult task for any white writer to capture whatever he believes that tone and language to be, without going over the line and capturing instead the sound of a minstrel show. The politics, however, Doctorow gets just right, down to a very personal level, from the lifting of the veil of freedom to the changes of perception that unfold even as black slaves continued to serve white masters after the armies of the North had already arrived. The reaction of the whites Doctorow renders with clarity and a hint of steely sym-

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pathy. While the blacks dare to envision a future in which they own land beside their former oppressors, or work for decent wages, the whites understand that Sherman's primary goal is to destroy the South's productive capacities and its various local economies, emancipation being a merely incidental part of this project. (Indeed, Lincoln, who wasn't so scrupulous about the Constitution while suspending the writ of habeas corpus, nevertheless believed he had no legitimate constitutional power to free the slaves except as a contingent military order.) One old gentleman, near death and traveling to see his brother for the last time, sees the devastation along the way and tries to instruct his housemaid on the facts:

> You best not tire yourself with all this frettin, Sophie said.
>
> She was right. He sat back down, closed his eyes, and said a prayer to calm himself. With his eyes closed, he smelled a dead country.
>
> Sophie, he said, am I the Pharaoh?
>
> She shook her head. She never knew what would come out of that mouth. You jes yerself, she said.
>
> Because if I'm the Pharaoh I'm convinced. I don't need no frogs, nor no locusts, I'm letting you go. You want your freedom, I grant it to you. And this, he said, waving his hand about, is what goes along with it. This is what you get with your nigger freedom.

The near-maudlin ending of the book—Lincoln's assassination, the romantic scene between Pearl and her soldier-lover—softens the blow of Doctorow's larger message, which is that the war in the end was a tragedy of high technology and bad ideas all around, a specifically American kind of tragedy full of seers and self-invented monarchs, an outburst of madness that completely destroyed the South and displaced thousands of its residents, both white and black. The "union" that Lincoln held so sacred was an idea more romantic than constitutional and, we have seen as recently as 2000 and 2004, has proved to be far more tenuous in reality than he ever permitted it to be in his imagination and his rhetoric. The vaunted way of life the Southerners fought to preserve was vicious, and they replaced it with something almost as vicious in short order. We're still paying the price of this war, with its well-armed religiosity and its strong pull toward disintegration. This understanding seeps into every line of Doctorow's prose and is part of what provides the writing with its vivid color and radiating implications. ■

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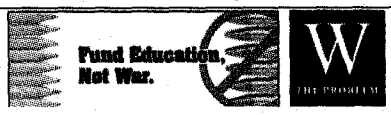

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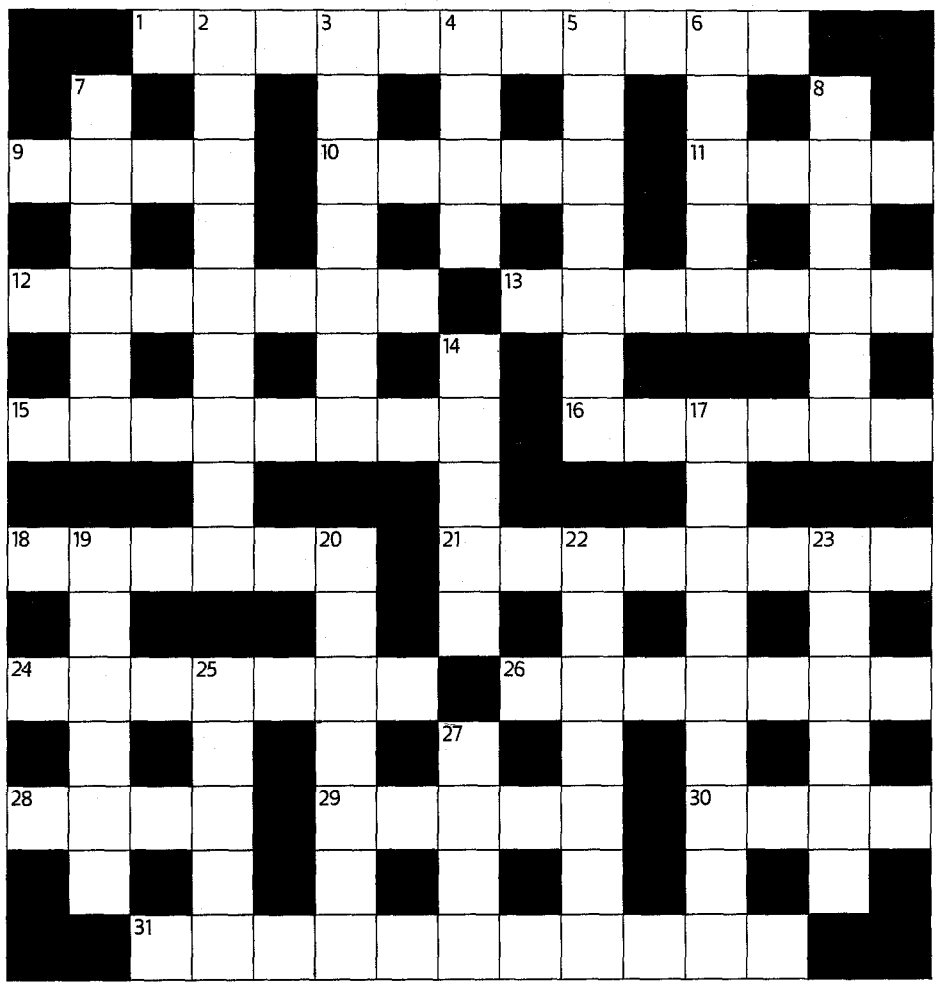

ACROSS

1 Exemplified by 4, a bang-up toy for physicists! (4-7)

9 In good health because of the water here? (4)

10 Responsible for a few lines of ground steak? (5)

11 A spinner, above everything else. (4)

12 An uneven throb with the beginning of science in it, which is good for a meal. (7)

13 Hey—by the sound of it you get the full name of a tiny individual. (7)

15 Like 12, it involves a bad throb when a proxy's confused with a large number finally. (8)

16 Flight taken with more than one 27 when a star is exploded. (6)

18 To the Japanese, Korea is specifically selected for it. (6)

21 It should get a 4-star rating (for aid to 1?), though this ham's certainly hammy! (5,3)

24 Makes obeisance, though the cooking vessel in reverse pulls something along with it. (7)

26 How things might be divided when a nonamateur tell-tale comes to a conclusion. (3,4).

28 A giggly reaction to a fence of the low-down type? (4)

29 Squashed tomato without a few words, but you might hang it on the wall. (5)

30 Proving every individual is likely to have a bad ache with it. (4)

31 Places where they sell hot dogs, according to various mental positions and attitudes. (11)

DOWN

2 Where they do a lot of gabbing, proving that a lecture displays the result. (How stalks grow out of it!) (4,5)

3 You might be told to do it, as long as the sun is out. (4,3)

4 Possibly 1 (you'd get 13 perhaps!), but you might have to swim it if the bridge is up. (4)

5 Small finches are a little relative, with skin trouble. (7)

6 It takes a long time to associate her with a rhyme scheme. (5)

7 There's a sign of iron on such a rocky road, but many a man places it on top. (6)

8 In Paris, a good word to that lady—one with a child, obviously. (6)

14 It might be said for a departed soul, as a way to get things together. (5)

17 A rather nasty description, especially if you dislike what you paid for the room. (9)

19 Sounds a bit like a woman of the streets getting something to smoke. (6)

20 Rather this? (Names go all directions except south and east.) (7)

22 What the churchman proclaimed is true, independent of observation. (1,6)

23 What a person might be good in, with a sense of what is appropriate, and nicely held together. (6)

25 You might be given the unbuttered type at dinner, if they like you. (5)

27 Wild pets—which you usually take one at a time. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3006

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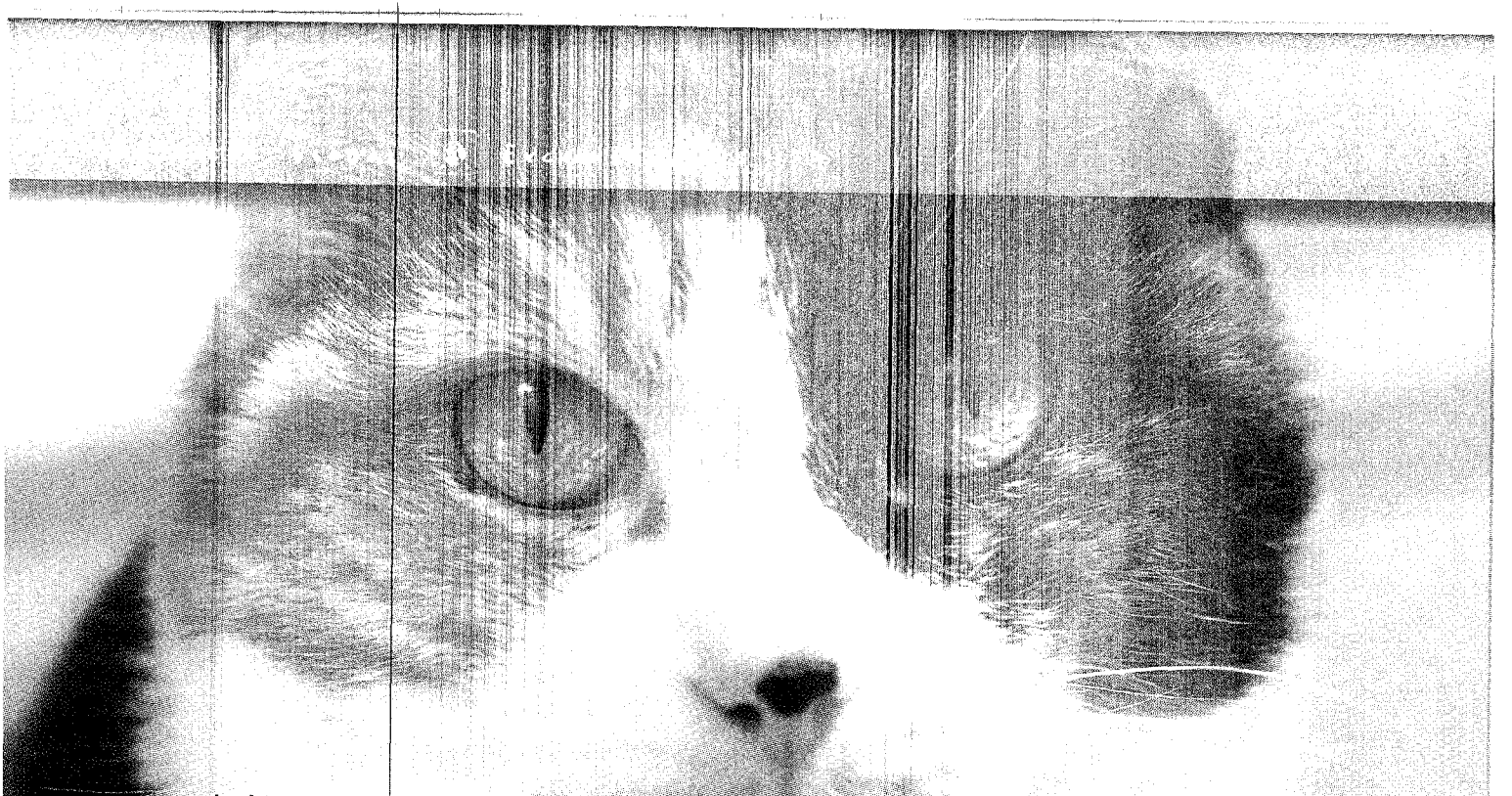

is it acceptable that, in her short life, feline B-471 will wear more makeup than a . . .

supermodel?

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eco-fashion
natural health and body
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conservation/recycling
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natural foods
conservation/cafe

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amy goodman
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jim hightower
let's stop beating around the bush
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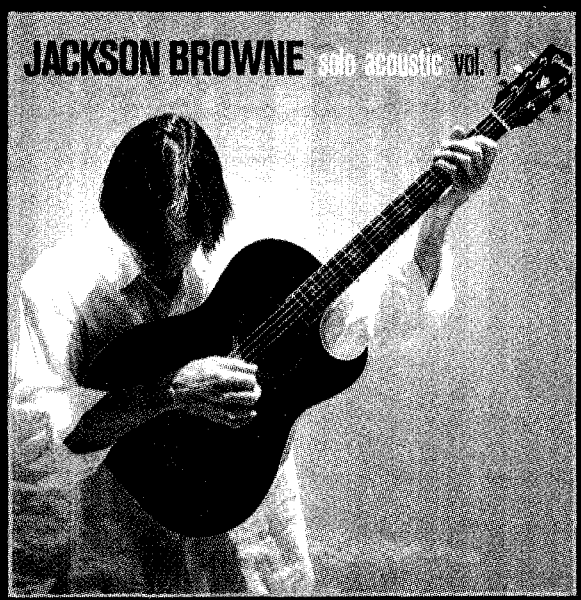

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